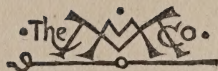


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FRANKNESS IN RELIGION

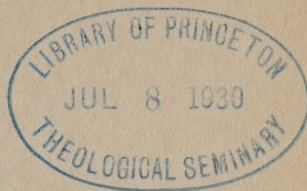


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FRANKNESS IN RELIGION



By
ROBERT J. HUTCHEON

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PREFACE

This book has not been written for professors of theology but for intelligent laymen and open-minded ministers who find it difficult, if not impossible, to accept the great Christian tradition in the form in which it has been handed down to them. Some minds have always found it impossible to accept the ecclesiastical interpretation of Christianity; but in the last two decades, because of the influence of science and historical criticism, an ever-increasing multitude of earnest men and women have found in it something entirely alien to the general trend of modern thought. The main difficulty with this ecclesiastical interpretation of Christianity lies in its isolation of the Christian religion from the rest of the cultural life of man by its doctrine of special revelation. Toward this difficulty the central argument of the book is directed. It is contended therein that all religion is man-made, not in the sense in which tools and machines are man-made, that is, by an invention that is conscious, deliberate and artificial, but in the sense in which language is man-made. Religion, including Christianity, is interpreted as a natural and spontaneous evolution from the interests, feelings, desires, affections and passions of the living mind of man. It is no doubt true that the higher contents of the religious consciousness emerge unsought from the play of man's spiritual activity and that great concep-

tions arise rather from their own inner necessity than from any deliberate cogitation; in other words, the realities of the higher religion are discovered, not invented, but the discovery itself is a part of the human psychological process.

The title of the book, which has been suggested by others rather than chosen by the author himself, indicates the spirit rather than the contents of the book. In times of great theological ferment like ours, those who have intelligence enough to feel the problems, but not courage enough to think them through and take the consequences, are tempted to fall back either into the mists of mysticism and fantasy, or into the capacious arms of authority. This book is an invitation to the perplexed reader to take the difficult but open road of "thinking things through." What is threatened by science and criticism, the author believes, is not in the last analysis the moral dignity, spiritual worth or cosmic significance of man but only an antiquated interpretation of the spiritual process and of man's place in the cosmos. Our great need is such an interpretation of the religious life of man as shall make it seem an inevitable part of his total cultural evolution and therefore independent of any special apologetic.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the editor of "The Christian Register" for permission to use as chapter thirteen of this book an article contributed to that paper in July, 1927.

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FRANKNESS IN RELIGION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The human race has lived through many great tragedies during its career on the earth. We may be sure that the ups and downs of life in the hundreds of thousands of years that preceded the historical period were unimaginably severe but we need not go back to those primeval ages for our illustrations—the historical period, brief as it is, provides them in abundance. Epidemics of disease have swept across great continents and left so many dead that the living could hardly bury them. Barbarian hordes, led by some Alaric or Genseric or Attila or Genghis Khan, have swooped down on older and more cultivated peoples and destroyed millions of their subjects and the most valued objects of their civilization. Fratricidal wars, such as the Peloponnesian War in Greece, the Thirty Years' War in Germany and the great World War whose agonizing memories are still with us, have desolated nations and set civilization back hundreds of years. Mighty political upheavals such as the French Revolution and the recent Russian Revolution have excited the passions of men until cruelty and brutality became as easy for them as kindness is in normal life. But, painful as these tragedies have been, they pale in social significance alongside of that ever-recurring tragedy which

we ourselves are witnessing just now—I mean, the slow decay of a great organized religious system. The suffering caused by such decay is generally very inward and private and in our time does not often lead to physical violence; it is a kind of suffering that the animals do not share with us at all because it is due to what is specifically human in our nature; nevertheless in all highly sensitive persons it pierces to the very quick of the spirit and has immense social reverberations. When a highly organized religious system has supplied the most binding sanctions to our morality, the strongest support to our political institutions, the most universally accepted philosophy of life to our people, and, through its sacred scriptures, has exercised a profound influence on our very speech, the decay of such a system is a social phenomenon of the first order.

That Christianity as conceived by Roman Catholicism, the Reformation churches and the Evangelical churches of more recent origin has fallen upon difficult times it is impossible to deny. We may go further and say boldly that the great historical Christian system is in rapid decay. If such is the case, it is a fact of major significance. That system has given form to the life and thought of the most important peoples of the world to-day. It has been professed by all the peoples of Europe and America and by a goodly number on the other continents as well. It has supplied a moral setting, a social framework, a general world-view to a quarter of the world's total population and the break-up of that "frame of reference" is sure to result in much spiritual chaos and not a little reckless anti-social individualism. Of the people who have been influenced by the traditional Christian system it is not necessary

to suppose that many have held it on grounds of personal reflection, but it has come to them with the authority of men whose prestige they have respected and it has dominated them as completely as though they had thought it out for themselves. The widespread revolt against the authority of the priest and the clergyman affects them, then, as truly, if not as profoundly, as their own skeptical thinking would do.

The trouble into which Christianity has fallen is due mainly to the fact that it has taken up into itself so many elements foreign to its original and essential principles. It preserved itself in the days of the Roman Empire by accommodating itself to or, rather, taking up into its own system the philosophy and to some extent the religious practices of the groups it met with. Otherwise it would have remained a Jewish sect and disappeared as other religious movements of the times did disappear. This power of assimilation, of syncretism, of adjustment to new intellectual and social environments, has generally been regarded as a unique quality in the Christian religion. The story of the exercise of this unique power by Christianity has been retold recently with great freshness and great profundity of scholarship by the French writer Guignebert and I would refer any reader interested in following the matter up further, to his pages.¹ But a time came when historical Christianity could no longer adjust itself to new intellectual environments and had enough ecclesiastical and political power to protect itself against the influence of such environments. It could not eliminate from its system, so as to be able to meet the new needs of new times, the speculative and autocratic elements which it had incorporated from Greece

¹ Guignebert: *Christianity, Past and Present*, Macmillan, New York, 1927.

and Rome. All it could do was to consolidate and fortify and defend the positions it had already taken.

For hundreds of years the Roman Catholic church has made no effort to distinguish between the primitive Christian elements and the foreign elements in its own dogmatic system but has treated them all alike as a deposit of faith, as a divinely authorized system of belief and practice to be preserved and administered by the church in their entirety. The Protestant churches which sprang out of the Reformation rejected the divine authority and the central control of the Roman Catholic church but they did not reject the main framework of the Roman Catholic dogmatic system. Hence they have presented almost as determined an opposition to the advance of science and philosophy, where they impinge on religious dogmas, as the Roman Catholic church itself. So far as their attitude toward free inquiry in religious matters is concerned, there is little to choose between Roman Catholicism and Protestant Fundamentalism.

Upon this whole system of authoritative religious beliefs the blows of biblical criticism, history, the evolutionary sciences and the psychology of religion have fallen, directly and indirectly, with shattering effect. I do not mean to say that Roman Catholicism or Protestantism as religious institutions have suffered very seriously as yet. I only mean that multitudes of *individuals* have been detached completely from the old system so far as their own private thought is concerned and show a complete indifference to it in all their personal efforts to find out what is true. In those colleges and universities where a modern curriculum is carried out, the old dogmatic world-view of historical

Christianity is frankly set aside as no longer needing even refutation.

It would have been surprising if such a decay of a great inherited system of beliefs in the bolder and freer minds had not produced a tremendous stir in the modern world. Three attitudes toward the movement have been assumed by different groups of people.

Roman Catholicism and Protestant Fundamentalism have taken up the challenge in the spirit of the stand-patter and the irreconcilable. They have elected to make a determined fight for the whole of their inherited systems of divinely authorized and authoritative beliefs. No sense of the ridiculousness of their assumption of infallibility, no feeling of humility before the immense and undeniable achievements of the new scientific methods, no respect for the conscientious and exhaustive research on which the new biblical and historical learning is based, seem to weaken for a moment the pugnacious determination of Roman Catholics and Fundamentalists to stand for the whole faith as delivered to them by the fathers. The Roman Catholic church has, at least outwardly, won its fight against the modernists within its own official ranks. Every official is now required to sign an anti-modernist statement and to declare that he will carefully preserve the faith of the church. If the Protestant Fundamentalists have not won so signal a victory in their respective denominations, it is not because their will to victory is lacking but because there is no centralized ecclesiastical control over the religious and educational institutions from which the hated teaching comes. Their fighting spirit seems to renew itself with every fresh battle and they are willing to use all sorts of weapons in their

warfare—the public debate, the state legislature, the ecclesiastical convention—but the democratic control of Protestant institutions has prevented them, thus far, from winning many decisive victories. What victories or defeats the future may bring them remains to be seen but the spirit revealed by them indicates what the fate of liberal institutions would be if they once got the upper hand and retained it through a series of years. It would inevitably involve far more than the control of churches and theological schools.

Violently opposed to Roman Catholicism and Protestant Fundamentalism is the scattered and unorganized but numerous host of men and women who for one reason or another have conceived a bitter hatred of Christianity and all it suggests to them. They include the anti-clericals who have known Christianity only in its Roman Catholic form and who identify it with political domination, actual or desired, ecclesiastical control of education, hostility to science and general opposition to progress; the disciples of Nietzsche who are not content merely to repudiate the dogmatic ecclesiastical Christianity which arouses the ire of the anti-clericals but denounce even the original message of Jesus and the Gospels as the morality of slaves, an attempt of the weak to persuade to kindness those who are too strong to be compelled; the rationalists and skeptics who are opposed to all religions on the ground that they deal with the unknown and perhaps the unknowable, and, without achieving any practical results, claim for themselves the attention which ought to be devoted to the knowable and the attainable; and, finally, the materialists who, living on a low sensuous level themselves and prizing only instinctive values, see no reason why any one should seek the so-called values

of the spirit and are therefore completely unconcerned about the decay of the traditional religious system. All of these classes of people would echo the cry of Voltaire, *écrasez l'infame*, and raise a pæan of joy if Christian institutions should collapse and fall.

If these two attitudes toward Christianity were the only possible ones, the future would be very dark indeed. Men would go on shouting wrath and hatred toward one another across a psychological chasm that could never be bridged. But a third attitude is possible. Men may maintain that religious faith is necessary if human life is to rise to the highest level of imaginative creativity, spiritual self-realization and social enterprise but insist at the same time that the dogmas of historical Christianity, instead of being a help, are a positive hindrance to the act of faith, which is less a knowledge-judgment than a committal of the spirit to a conviction concerning the eternal worth and the cosmic support of values. They may agree that the historical Christian system has transformed the original message of Jesus into something that he would hardly recognize and yet contend against Nietzsche that that original message is no weak slave-morality, but a brave vision of the ideal human life which men could live if they would only let their higher nature unfold itself and find expression in social relations. They may join with the agnostic in acknowledging that the ultimate structure and nature of Reality is unknown, in the scientific sense of knowing through machines and their pointer-readings, and yet believe that the total mind of man can react to the totality of our experienced world with beliefs and hopes and volitional attitudes which evoke our highest energies and make for the successful adjustment of our life to environing reality. The men who

take up some such attitude as this go by various names—modernists, liberals, philosophical theists, etc. They do not always use the same language or formulate their thought in the same technical terms, but they all desire to free religious faith from the extraneous theological dogmas with which it has been unnaturally associated and to preserve it as a creative, constructive attitude toward life and the cosmos. Their main drive is practical rather than speculative. They are not mere cowardly compromisers although both extremists are apt to think them so. They believe that life is more inclusive than logic, that the committal of ourselves to beliefs and experimental programs which lead out into the unknown is inevitable and therefore they part company with the rationalists and skeptics who are so afraid of being duped that they will not commit themselves beyond their present limited knowledge; but they refuse with equal firmness to bind up the practical, experimental, dynamic will-attitude, which faith really is, with any theological system which the speculative intellect has constructed or may construct in the future.

It is the hope of this third group, by the application of their critical method, to save for humanity the essential spiritual values which religious faith and especially the Christian form of it, creates. The Roman Catholics and the Fundamentalists, too, are passionately eager to save those spiritual values but they have never learned to apply to Christianity the principle enunciated by the Fourth Gospel: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Only the liberals, who to-day are inevitably evolutionists, have grasped the meaning of the principle—die to live. As wise gardeners know that the fruit-bearing capacity of

the grape-vine resides, not in the branches that bore fruit last year, but in the roots which are in direct contact with the soil and therefore do not hesitate to cut the old branches away, so the liberals know that the living sources of present-day Christianity are to be found, not in events that took place nineteen hundred years ago, but in the awakened emotions and imaginations of living men and women, oriented toward the highest values and the noblest souls of all time. They know, also, that these present experiences must be allowed progressively to generate their own forms of doctrinal or institutional expression and therefore they take no alarm when old creeds and formulas and institutions are thrown on to the scrap-heap. Evolution has completely convinced them that structure is subordinate to function, that creed, priesthood and ministry are only means to the great end of arousing, stimulating and organizing spiritual personality, and, once convinced that the function is being carried on, they feel no grave anxiety about the structures or organs used.

The task of liberalism, I have said, is to save the essential moral and spiritual values of religious faith, both from the dogmatists who insist on identifying them with a scheme of thought which has no basis whatsoever in modern knowledge and from the skeptics, rationalists and positivists who insist that man's spirit can find complete satisfaction within the realm of the known and that, therefore, religious faith or any belief about the nature of the infinite Reality that goes beyond the known and the demonstrable is not only unnecessary but a positive weakness and hindrance in our effort to adjust ourselves to the conditions of life. They see clearly that the salvaging of Christianity is not to be

brought about by demonstrating its practical superiority to other religions or by an ingenious defense of its traditional claim to a supernatural origin and supernatural mission. Educated people in Christian countries know much more about the history of other religions now than their fathers did and the claim of historical Christianity to a supernatural origin loses most of its impressiveness when it becomes known that other great religions have made similar claims for themselves. Liberals believe, therefore, that something much more fundamental is required than a new version of the old apologetic which concerned itself, not with the defense of the religious interest as such, but only with the defense of the so-called revealed religion of the Old and New Testaments. As the World War was interpreted by President Wilson as a war to make the world safe, not merely for the British and French democracies, but for democracy as a universal principle of political organization, so the liberals conceive their task, primarily, as that of justifying the religious function or attitude or interest in general as a prime factor in the evolution of the higher life of man, and only secondarily as that of defending Christianity as the most pragmatically significant of all the forms that the religious consciousness has projected.

Wherever human life reaches a certain stage of mental evolution, religion arises as universally as language, art and social institutions. Plainly it must be rooted in psychological necessity. It does not arise, so far as we can judge, in the life of those anthropoid animals that are nearest to man, although they have the same physical needs and the same physical environment as man has. The source of religion, therefore, must be in those psychic factors which distinguish man

from the animals. If religion is to be defended against its enemies, it can be done only by tracing it back to its sources in the needs, aspirations and creative activities of the human spirit confronted by the weird, majestic, beautiful, awful, tremendous, mysterious universe which man became aware of when he was finally aroused out of the long sleep of his anthropoid ancestors, and then by showing that the human needs and the cosmic situation have not essentially changed in our own time. The reinterpretation of religion is not the effort to take it apart and rebuild it on rationalistic lines. The great creations of the human spirit are for a large part subconscious and unpremeditated. We cannot tell what the art or poetry or religion of the future are to be because we cannot tell how the human spirit will react to the mighty movements, social and cosmic, which lie ahead of man in the ages to come. Hence it would be presumptuous to try to lay down the lines of spiritual evolution within which man must develop.

Our task is not so much to reconstruct religion as to reinterpret it, that is, to show how it has arisen and some of the main stages of its evolution, in the hope that, having followed in thought the course it seems to have taken, we may be the better prepared to remove from its path the obstacles, intellectual, emotional and social, which now hinder its further development. Conspicuous as has been the rôle of individuals in the sphere of religion, religion itself has sprung out of the yearning, questing, creative mind of the race and no individual and no group of individuals can determine beforehand what new forms that creative mind may project in the years to come. All we can do is to concentrate attention on the psychological and social ex-

periences which constitute the creative matrix of vital religion and warn against the ever-recurring tendency of the human mind to substitute the repetition of and discussion about stereotyped theological interpretations for the living movement of the awakened spirit.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION

The suggestion that imagination has anything to do with religion is resented by many people on the ground that it introduces into what they consider the most serious and permanent interest of life an element of fancifulness, unreality, make-believe and baseless subjectivity. But the conception of the imagination which underlies this feeling is quite antiquated. There is nothing distinctively human in which imagination does not play a large part. No doubt it does suggest subjectivity more readily than the words revelation or reason which in most minds always evoke a feeling of solid objectivity. But while imagination *may* live in a sort of dream-world and take illusions and hallucinations as real, the exercise of imagination that is to help man in his life-adjustments must be more representative of the objective world of experience. There are those of course to whom religion will seem objective only if they can believe that it is as much a gift to man as stars and mountains and forests and rivers and snow and rain. It is this insistent demand for a solid kind of objectivity that makes people believe readily in a special revelation and an infallible church. But the variety of religions in the world claiming to be revealed and the obvious evolution of the best known of them make it impossible for us to acquiesce now in this conception of objectivity.

Religions, like languages, now seem and really are quite objective to the people who profess them and use them. The great Christian churches were here before those now living were born; their sacred scriptures, their institutions and for the most part their doctrines owe little if anything to the present generation; they dominate most persons' feeling, imagination and thought from the cradle up and so they come to be naïvely regarded by many almost as a part of nature. Likewise languages seem objective to the human mind. We have no memory of our own first efforts at speech; we know that we speak a language which we did not create and that we have inherited a mighty literature from a far-distant past and from these simple facts we generally infer that language is a given thing like any object of sense-perception. But it is now known that these languages which seem to us as objective as the books in which they are printed have had a long history, have undergone a thousand changes, have grown in vocabulary and syntax and idiom, and, although we cannot be quite sure just how they began, we are sure that they are entirely human, not in the sense that the meanings enshrined in them are fanciful, subjective and unreal (for, if that were the case, they would long ago have perished), but in the sense that every sound was achieved accidentally or experimentally by the human voice and that every order of sentence-structure, every figure of speech, every idiom, every turn of phrase, every meaning was arrived at, consciously or unconsciously, by the human imagination and the human reason.

So with religions. They have seemed to most people in the past as objective as the churches, cathedrals, basilicas, mosques, temples and pagodas wherein their

devotees worshiped. But we know better now. Every one of them has had a long history and when we trace their evolution back as near as we can to the beginning we are forced to the conclusion that their ultimate source is the human spirit itself, not indulging in pure fancy or converting dreams, illusions and hallucinations into objective realities, but answering back to the challenge of the universe, asserting itself against the pressure of the unknown and the overwhelming, claiming affinity with the mighty presences that surrounded it. We can sympathize with those who fear that subjectivity may prove the grave of religion. But the wide acceptance of the subjective or psychological origin of language is not proving the grave of language. Language is subjective in origin but increasingly objective in content. It is constantly revising its most significant words and adding new words so as to make its meanings more precise. And there is no reason why this should not be, in some measure at least, the case with religion as well. Religion is subjective, man-made, in the sense that it sprang out of the human spirit trying to adjust itself to the all-encompassing reality; it is even more subjective than language because the objects it deals with are larger and harder to symbolize than those with which language deals and the adequacy of its symbols is more difficult to test; but it has always been objective, too, inasmuch as its objects, whether rightly interpreted or not, were actually present in some sense to the human mind.

It costs most religious people who have been brought up in the supernaturalist tradition, with its conception of a religion objectively revealed, a painful mental struggle to acknowledge that religion like language, architecture, poetry, painting, music, etc., is a human

creation. To make that admission seems to them tantamount to saying that it is dependent on the fallible, shifting, imperfect thing called human nature and that it is sure to be subjected to all the changes to which fickle human nature is liable. But human nature, though very fallible, is not so fickle a thing after all as the supernaturalists claim. It has an abiding structure, an unchanging will-to-live, persistent needs, a mass of social instincts, a feeling of shame when wrong has been done, a never-to-be-satisfied curiosity, a powerful will-to-believe, a sense of reverence in the presence of the sublime, a strong impulse to creativity. These elements in human nature are not always equally in evidence. Different circumstances evoke them differently. But they are always present in the race even though they may seem dormant for the moment in many individuals. And it is this permanent structure of human nature that makes it possible for us to feel that, in grounding religion in human nature, we are not building on the sand. To recur to our former illustration, many of the world's great languages are dead but speaking and writing still go on. All languages are not equally adequate for their purpose but the creative imagination has never entirely failed any people, for we never find even a savage group without some form of speech. Man himself is the living fountain of language, creating it in the first place and then reshaping it whenever a mingling of peoples makes it necessary. And so it is in the field of religion. Religions come and go but no tribe has yet been found without some kind of religion. The history of religion tells us of many dead religions but the decay of old religions is generally due to the growth and rivalry of new ones. Human nature has been prolific in its output of mythologies and

religions, because the need for some mental adjustment to environing reality has always been great and the imagination has always been able to meet the need in some more or less satisfactory way.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to try to show that, even if the creative imagination rather than supernatural revelation is the organ of religious truth, it does not follow that our religious beliefs are purely fanciful and subjective because the creative imagination is itself an organ of revelation, that is, a means of divining or visioning or penetrating the nature of the living universe.

Those who believe in evolution do not always conceive the process as including mental evolution, but such an inclusion is inevitable. The evolution of the nervous system and the mental life which it makes possible has been traced by Hobhouse and others throughout the animal and human worlds with enough detail to force the conclusion that the mind was evolved as well as the body. Whatever else the mind is and may yet be (and I am inclined to go with the idealists rather than the behaviorists in assigning the mind its place in the universe) at any rate it has been an agency of adjustment to the world in which we have arisen. If this is true, an inference of great importance may be drawn which is not generally drawn, namely, that the mind is what it is because the world is what it is. As an instrument of adjustment it has formed its structure necessarily on the structure of the world. Because there is light we have eyes; because there are vibrations of the air we have ears; because matter takes a gaseous and a liquid form we have smell and taste; because the earth has the rhythm of day and night, our bodies have alternating periods of activity and rest. We are told by biologists

that "the structure of any animal is the product of the balance between its own constitution and the environment that surrounds it." On a lower level of being, "a drop of mercury on a saucer assumes approximately the shape of a sphere because of the laws of surface tension between mercury and air and mercury and china."

What I am suggesting now is that something of this sort is true of mind. All our mental processes—sensation, perception, memory, association, imagination, conception, reason—correspond to something in the objective world. The balance between them is not so mechanical that we never make mistakes in our reactions; nevertheless the persistence throughout all human history of these mental processes warrants the conclusion that the structure they have achieved has been due to the structure of the stimuli to which the organism has been reacting. For example, the concepts and generalizations by which we order our experiences must correspond, if they are to serve the purposes for which we create them, to the general structure of the world we are experiencing and the reason why we can perceive that general structure and tell our neighbors about it in intelligible symbols is because our minds and theirs have grown up in response to the pressure which it has made upon them.

I do not wish to press this point too far because, carried to an extreme, it would eliminate subjectivity, error, illusion and hallucination from the mind altogether and make it a mechanism completely controlled by the external world. But taken in the large it seems to me true and, if true, important. For if it is true, the imagination, which is one of the mind's most universally useful processes, cannot be regarded in its

essential working as subjective and fanciful. There is something in the external world corresponding to our taste, our smell, our hearing, our sight, our concepts, our mathematical symbols, our scientific generalizations, and, though we hesitate to admit it, there is something in the world corresponding to the combining, associating, experimenting activity which we call imagination. When we read what modern physics has to say about the dance of the electrons around the nucleus of the atom, what chemistry has to say about the combining powers of the elements, what biology has to say about the intricacies of the cell and its marvelous processes of division and reproduction, we can see why a recent English writer has called his metaphysics, *The World as Imagination*. The evolving world as interpreted by modern scientists makes upon our minds the impression, not of something being unwound as from a spool, but of something experimenting, feeling its way along, striking out novelties, lifting itself to higher levels, synthesizing its processes so as to achieve more complex results—in a word, it seems like a great creative imagination at work and at play. And if that should be the real nature of the world-process, our imagination with its endless playing, combining, experimenting, inventing and projecting would be readily explained. It would be our mind's answer back to the nature of the world in which it has arisen. I am not claiming objectivity for every fancy which the imagination creates, for the human race has followed too many will-o'-the-wisps to make such a claim reasonable. I am only claiming that through the free play of the imagination we get a real insight into the nature of the world-process and suggesting that the great substantial enduring creations of the imagination may be after all

the best revelations of the truth about reality that we, with our mental limitations, can attain.

If people could achieve a greater confidence in the validity of the insights attained by the imagination, they would have less trouble in abandoning the old concept of supernatural revelation. Historically that concept has supplied fixity and complete reliability to the religious believer and to abandon it for the play of creative imagination seems like stepping off the solid rock into a spongy, bottomless bog. But that feeling is not justified. It may be that abandoning the safety of supernatural revelation for the risks of creative imagination is to be compared rather to the young eagle's first flight from the nest on some precipitous rock where it was hatched, into the unsupported air over the mighty ocean. At first, no doubt, a spasm of fear seizes it and it would fain be back in the sheltered nest, but, as its inherited instinct of flight asserts itself and its wings gain power, it takes to the air as to its natural home. So is it with the greatest spirits in the realm of religion. They have mighty confidences, convictions, committals, but they have no such external support for their faith as those demand who still cling to the notion of supernatural revelation. They are men of faith and vision. They believe in the worth of their ideals and in the objectivity of the Being they worship on the ground of the overwhelming subjective reality of these in their own experience. The young eagle can safely trust itself to its wings because all the past experience of its species has shaped its body and its instincts for life in the air. So the spirit of man can trust its deepest intuitions, can depend upon the practical insight of the creative imagination, when aroused into action by life's deepest needs, because the

imagination itself through the long evolution of the human mind has been shaped so as to answer back to the world's structure.

It seems well, then, to set forth as clearly as we can just what we mean here by imagination and by imaginative or poetic truth.

It is obvious to us all, as soon as we think about it, that certain parts of our minds are older and more widely shared with our neighbors than certain other parts. In the anonymous life of our great cities we often have very little to do with our neighbors because our professional or commercial or social interests are different from theirs; but when a great disaster happens in our community and our more deep-seated feelings are appealed to, we find that we have a few profound interests at least in common with those neighbors. There is a more ancient and universal human nature in us all than our isolated city-life often makes evident. Science, professional vocation, politics and business isolate us from one another and make us practical, narrow, strong-willed for action and often intensely individualistic and even selfish. But in most of us there is a deeper mind. As the base of a coral reef is older, deeper and larger than the little island that appears above the surface of the ocean, so the mind which we share with our fellows is older, deeper and larger than the trained and professionalized mind on which we often unduly pride ourselves. As Emerson says: "There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and all of the same." This deeper mind is racial rather than narrowly individual. It is to the voluntary, analytic, specialized, isolated mind what the body is to the arm and hand. Being more ancient and racial, it is more emotional,

more spontaneous, more effortless, more sensitive to the common joys and sorrows of men, more subject to strong currents of passion and more beyond the control of the conscious will.

Moreover, this deeper mind is in contact with a larger world than that of the more superficial voluntary mind with which we carry on the practical business of life. We all have hours of intense concentration when our world seems to narrow to the dimensions of the object with which we are occupied; but when our task is over and our minds are again free, most of us spring back with a swift rebound to the larger world of spontaneous feeling, uncontrolled thought and effortless reverie and play. Even when the task on which we are concentrating is some special scientific problem which only the very few have sufficient training or mentality to wrestle with at all, we feel that the world to which that problem confines us is a narrow one compared with the world which surrounds us when we are living in the more universal and racial mind. The problems suggested by that latter world often cannot even be approached by the reasoning faculty. We have no concepts stretchable enough to throw around it. We apprehend it in a vague way, it excites in us an attitude of awareness and attention, it is present to our total mind, it overawes our feelings but we realize that it is vain to confront it with voluntary thought. Even the most ignorant man who lives a petty treadmill existence is not without his larger world. He knows nothing of science; and his world, apart from the treadmill where he earns his keep, is perhaps nothing more than "a big, buzzing, blooming confusion"; nevertheless his awareness of that world and the awe and dumb wonder it inspires in him are proofs that he is a man after

all and not a mere industrious animal. As the circle which a pebble makes when it splashes into the water grows larger and larger until it touches the shore or passes the limit of our vision, so every man's world stretches out from the little spot to which he is habituated to a horizon that recedes further and further with every advance of his experience. In other words, the world in which we live perceptually, emotionally and imaginatively, is vastly richer, deeper and more extensive than the world we know.

Now, the medium through which this deeper, more racial, more universal mind which is in us all expresses itself, is the imagination. For thousands of years the human race seems to have been almost incapable of that voluntary, directed, individualized thought which is the parent of our science, industry, finance and education to-day. But what man lacked in voluntary thought he made up in spontaneous, playful, poetic, imaginative thinking. The world with all its startling weirdness, its shattering storms of thunder, lightning and rain, its quiet majesty, its ever-recurring seasons; the glitter of the frost, the colors of the sunsets, the rising of the moon in a clear sky, the song of birds in the spring, the teeming life of nature in the air, on land and in the water—all these things were present to man's consciousness and awakened his emotions to a degree of intensity which is scarcely ever experienced now by those who live the artificial, sheltered and at the same time imprisoned lives made possible by our voluntary, analytic, scientific thinking. Man was not dumb before this mysterious, majestic, weird, beautiful, threatening, all-powerful Reality which confronted him. He tried to tell what he thought about it, not by counting, weighing and measuring, estimating its space and time, for-

mulating the laws of its movements, distinguishing its parts from one another by careful analysis, but by recounting the impressions it made upon his own mind, the emotions he experienced in its presence, the images it caused to arise in his imagination. And the imaginative, poetic thinker is compelled to use the same method still. Poetic utterance is the gift of the deeper, more ancient and more racial mind and therefore it seems to the poet himself to come from external agencies, as his invocations to the muses indicate.

Whereas the modern scientist studies such aspects of objects as massiveness, acceleration, weight, extension, duration, temperature, resistance, strain, disturbance, etc., by using scales and measures and thermometers and barometers and stop-watches and dials and test-tubes and retorts and seismographs and the hundred and one other ingenious machines which he has invented for exploratory purposes and then by reading off the numbers which the pointers record on the machines, the imaginative thinker, on the other hand, describes the world he experiences by exhibiting in a glowing rhythmical way the reactions which the object contemplated evokes from his own æsthetic, ethical and spiritual nature. There are no machines yet which we can substitute for the human mind and its senses when we are dealing with beauty of form and color, the feel and taste and smell of things, the moral values of our social life or the great cosmic emotions of dependence, wonder and awe. The deeper, more racial mind itself, revealed in its own spontaneous reactions, affirmations, illuminations and visions, is the only indicator we have as to what the inner qualities of Reality are. But why should not this mind, the crowning achievement of the evolutionary process thus far, com-

ing to us as it does straight out of the heart of nature, be regarded as able to tell us something, out of its own spontaneous syntheses, of the nature which is its parent?

If we should desire some analogue in the natural world for the work of imagination, organic growth would be the most serviceable. The power of spontaneous division and reproduction, which the cell has, never ceases to excite the wonder as well as the curiosity of the imaginative biologist. Professor Bateson, one of this type, declares: "When I look at a dividing cell I feel as an astronomer might do if he beheld the formation of a double star: that an original act of creation is taking place before me." A similar wonder is awakened when we see a great imaginative structure rising before us. As the living cell has the power to take material from the outer world and transform it, through an internal process peculiar to itself, into its own substance and thus sustain its life and activities, so the imagination of the great genius has the power to take up the raw materials of sensation, perception and social experience which the environment supplies and make them over to suit its own creative purpose. It "sees into the life of things," lifts them up toward the human level, synthesizes them in a vital, non-mechanical way, illuminates them with its own moods, grows them together, as it were, into a new ideal existence. The great creations of the human imagination such as Homer's *Iliad*, the Greek temples, the Greek sculpture, Isaiah's prophecies, the drama of Job, the parables of Jesus, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the English abbeys, Michael Angelo's David and Moses, the tragedies of Shakespeare, Beethoven's symphonies, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, seem like a fulfillment of the

natural life-process. Emerson says of the great architectural structures :

These temples grew as grows the grass,
Art might obey but not surpass.
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

Something similar may be said of all great imaginative productions. Wherever the imagination builds up ideal structures, the deep, universal, spontaneous mind of the race is finding utterance. "Out from the heart of nature rolled, the burdens of the Bible old." No English poet of the second rank illustrates this more completely than Wordsworth. When we read "The Solitary Reaper" or "To a Highland Girl" or "She Was a Phantom of Delight" or "To a Skylark" or a score of others, we feel in each case as though he was uttering the feeling that all deep-hearted men and women experience when they are in the presence of such objects. His imagination selects unerringly just that quality of the object he is writing about which interprets for us its deepest value. All the wild romance of Highland scenery, all the forlornness of the solitary valleys, as they have been felt for a thousand years by the Gaelic clans of the Scottish hills, are felt anew by Wordsworth and made to pour forth in the song of the solitary reaper. In all his greatest poems he speaks less as an individual than as a child of nature and a spiritual brother of the common man. The same is true of all great poets. They are rich in the universal, racial mind; their poems take up into themselves the great traditions of the race and thus justify the dictum

of Aristotle that poetry is superior to history because, while history must record events in the temporal, superficial order of their occurrence, poetry exhibits them in the psychological order, that is, in the order which their own inner nature would determine if they were not interfered with by external agencies.

What we mean, then, by imaginative or poetic truth is the truth as uttered and apprehended by this deep, universal, spontaneous racial mind of man and as embodied in the great arts—language, poetry, the drama, architecture, sculpture, music, etc. Plainly this kind of truth cannot be put to the same practical uses as the scientific truth which is so widely current to-day. It cannot weigh or count or measure or analyze or control the objects of the external world for theoretical or industrial purpose. It cannot tell us what social legislation or reconstruction of economic machinery or redistribution of wealth are necessary to solve our social problems. But it is possible, nevertheless, to affirm that poetic truth is both true and useful, if we mean by true that it embodies the actual impressions which nature, life and man make upon us and if we mean by useful that it is contributory to our total well-being and to the well-being of society.

Many more or less successful attempts have been made recently to illustrate the difference between poetic and scientific truth. E. D. Martin, for example, compares poetic truth to the Stars and Stripes and scientific truth to a map of the United States. The flag stirs our emotions and energizes our will when the country, for reasons of glory, danger or policy, is specially conscious of itself. But it also embodies a great truth about the people of the United States. It not only recalls to our memories the story of the Republic's founding and the

gradual addition of the various states to the original thirteen, but it also represents a mighty social fact, namely, that the vast majority of one hundred and twenty million people have a group mind which may be counted on to react in definite ways to the situations of weal or woe in which the country may be placed. A good map, on the other hand, furnishes ready-made to the intelligent student a vast mass of useful knowledge about national and state boundaries, lakes, rivers, mountains, towns, cities, railroads, mines, industries, agriculture etc., but such knowledge is just as accessible to a Japanese student as to an American student and in itself would never determine one's personal reaction to the past or the future history of America. The flag is the external embodiment of an active sentiment, cherished with all degrees of intensity in the hearts of the people and capable on great occasions of arousing the will to its highest energy. The map, on the other hand, is a very great utility but has no effective relations with the emotional life of those who use it.

B. H. Streeter illustrates the difference in a somewhat similar way. Suppose you are trying to give an account of Venice to a friend who has not been there. You may read to him the description of the city which is to be found in Baedeker's guidebook and point out to him on Baedeker's map the location of the Grand Canal, St. Mark's and many other wonderful objects always of interest to the sightseer. But the canal-system, the streets, the bridges, the buildings, etc., do not tell the whole story that you wish to convey to your friend. You want also to give him some feeling of the color, the sunlight, the cloud effects, the atmosphere and the romance of the great show-city of the world.

For that purpose Baedeker is useless. But show him Turner's picture of Venice and you will have achieved your end. That picture alone would be a poor substitute for Baedeker to a sightseer who wanted to find his way about Venice, but if such a sightseer did not see what Turner represents, he would not know Venice. The total truth about Venice as actually experienced by any intelligent traveler needs both forms of representation.

Bertrand Russell's illustration is equally interesting although I shall give it a turn he does not give it. I shall quote his own words:

Between a piece of orchestral music as played, and the same piece of music as printed in the score, there is a certain resemblance, which may be described as a resemblance in structure. The resemblance is of such a sort that, when you know the rules, you can infer the music from the score or the score from the music. But suppose you had been stone-deaf from birth, but had lived among musical people. You could understand, if you had learned to speak and to do lip-reading, that the musical scores represented something quite different from themselves in intrinsic quality, though similar in structure. The value of music would be completely unimaginable to you, but you could infer all its mathematical characteristics since they are the same as those of the score. Now our knowledge of nature is something like this. We can read the scores, and infer just so much as our stone-deaf person could have inferred about music.

This seems to me an excellent illustration of the kind of knowledge about nature that the physical sciences

supply. Physical science gives us a good deal of highly useful knowledge about what Eddington calls the metrical aspects of the world, just as mathematics can tell a tone-deaf man a good deal about music as it stands written on the score. But of the non-metrical aspects of the world science does not pretend to tell us anything. Russell would say that of these aspects we have no knowledge whatsoever from any source. The contention made here, however, is that poetic and symbolic knowledge of those non-metrical aspects is achieved by the great imaginative geniuses of the race in the various arts and religions. In representing the impressions which the active environment makes on their own minds, they tell us something of that active environment itself. The natural mind of man, that is, the human mind as it appears before it has made any definite effort to direct its own development, is surely the greatest achievement of terrestrial evolution known to us and must reflect some light back on the process that produced it. That natural mind, as time goes on, becomes conscious of itself and begins to take some part in its own future evolution. The creature becomes in turn a creator. His mind begins to play freely with its own images, to combine them in ways unknown to animal life, to interpret masses of experience into terms of their most significant aspects, to project itself on to the greater objects of nature as a principle of explanation. Out of this imaginative activity grow all the mythologies, cosmogonies, poems, dramas and religions of the world. Man the mythologist, the poet, the dramatist, the philosopher, the seer is still nature's child; nature is functioning in his imaginative activity and it is the

contention of this chapter that the great creations of imaginative genius may be legitimately taken as symbols of the cosmic creative process which brings all worlds into being.

Or, to recur to an illustration used earlier in this chapter, without the arms, hands and fingers the human body would be a very ineffective organism. They are its main executive agents; they gather and prepare its food; they weave and sew its garments; they build its houses and railroads and ships and skyscrapers; they defend it against its enemies. Nevertheless a human body can live and think and be happy without fingers, hands or arms. They do not contain a single organ vital to the human being. Indeed many lowly creatures have lived successfully since the beginning of life on the earth without any one of these organs. Well! the voluntary, specialized, analytic, scientific activities of our minds are, in a similar way, enormously useful; without them most of the conveniences and luxuries of present-day civilization would be impossible; our arts would all be crippled for lack of the knowledge which these activities furnish us; but after all they are to the racial, involuntary, imaginative mind what arms, hands and fingers are to the body. It is in this older, deeper, universal, spontaneous mind that our actual life is for the most part lived; it is the source of our loves, hates, passions, ambitions, hopes, fears, convictions, virtues, joys and sorrows; it must be sustained in full activity if our life is to remain vigorous, optimistic, heroic, satisfying to ourselves and helpful to others and the motive that has urged me to the writing of this book is the conviction that religion is one of the essential agencies in the maintenance of a robust spiritual life in any

people and that to this end it must be freed from all the old outworn supernaturalistic wrappings which prevent it from taking its rightful place in the cultural life of humanity.

CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGIN OF RELIGION

When one turns over the pages of George Foote Moore's *History of Religions* or any other standard textbook on that subject, his first impression is one of confusion and bewilderment. It seems impossible to find one's way about in such a jungle. But with increasing familiarity a certain rough order begins to appear. There are common elements in human life all over the world; the great forces of nature are in evidence everywhere, on mountain as on plain, on land as on sea, and so it is natural that man should have reacted in much the same way to the same kind of environment. There are hundreds of thousands of different animal species on the earth, yet we can group them all together in a few primary divisions called sub-kingdoms and speak of "natural styles of animal architecture." There are hundreds of languages spoken by different peoples today, yet a close examination of the most developed of these languages shows that common principles of construction run through them all. Millions of buildings for all sorts of purposes have been erected by man but most of them can be traced back to a few styles of architecture like the Gothic, the Greek, the Egyptian, etc., and modifications of these. The creativity of nature is certainly prolific and bewildering, but after all

she is parsimonious of her forms and uses them over and over again. So it need not surprise us to find that all religions now are traced back to a common origin, or, let us rather say, to the same source in the human mind, the same impulse of self-preservation. The differences between them are now believed to be due to differences in the psychic capacity, in the development and in the social and physical environments of the peoples who profess them, rather than to the supposed fact that some are natural while others are revealed.

Compared with previous theories as to the origin of religion, this one certainly seems simple and intelligible. To be told that religion always implies some kind of want is intelligible to every one, for every one knows what wants are and how distressed he feels when his major wants are not satisfied. The old explanations of the origin of religion always left our questions unanswered and our minds perplexed. If priests invented religions in order to control and enslave the people, we always wanted to know how such wholesale deception was possible and how the people were persuaded to retain what did them no service. If religion was only primitive philosophy, how was it possible to interest the people in such a merely intellectual thing, since it is not possible to interest them in philosophy now? If it originated in a primitive revelation, how was it possible for man either to grasp and use or to remember and hand on what, by hypothesis, he did not understand? If only an anthropological inquiry into prehistoric life could discover the origin of religion, we felt that such an enterprise would be "about as wise as the search for the soul of music in the strains of the

tomtom.”¹ All these old explanations of the origin of religion have been tried and found wanting.

On the other hand, when we are told by G. F. Moore that “the universal, supreme, perpetual motive of religion is to be found in the impulse to self-preservation” we feel ourselves on solid ground at once, because the starting-point of our investigation is within our own minds. We know ourselves to be creatures of desire; we know what arduous enterprises we are willing to undertake in order to satisfy our desires; and so when we are told by Leuba that “what religion aims at is life in its greatest possible fulness” or by Coe that “religion is the progressive discovery and reorganization of values” or by Wright that “it is the endeavor to secure the conservation of socially recognized values,” we realize that religion is being treated from a point of view that we do not need to jump out of our own skin to comprehend. When we think of religion, as most people still do think of it, as a gift, a deposit, a supernatural revelation from some other realm of being, an authoritative way of life imposed on us from above, we may feel obliged to accept it as a fact and conform to it as a moral and social necessity, but we must abandon all efforts to understand it or adjust it to our needs; but when we think of religion as the answer back of our minds, in their eagerness for self-preservation and self-fulfillment, to the pressure of the infinite reality standing over against them, we feel that the mystery of religion is part of the mystery of ourselves and that by patience and understanding we may win to a better comprehension of it and to a more fruitful and progressive use of it in our own lives.

But we must not leave Moore’s judgment that “the

¹ Wm. Morgan, *The Nature and Right of Religion*.

universal, supreme, perpetual motive of religion is to be found in the impulse to self-preservation" unanalyzed. Man shares his impulses to self-preservation and even to race-preservation with the animals. But the animals have no religion or at least do not behave in ways that we can interpret as religious. What makes the difference? In answering this question we find ourselves obliged to emphasize a factor which the modern psychologists of religion who stress the desire-and-value-elements in it are apt to overlook. In their opposition to the method of defining religion by referring to its belief-content, they are inclined to pass over the cognitive element altogether. But the reason why man is religious and animals are not is that man can *imagine, conceive, judge and reason* in a fairly elaborate and self-controlled way whereas animals can not. If these new intellectual powers of man had been only more efficient ways of satisfying the old animal desires (which sometimes they were) and had had no transforming influence upon the desires themselves, then religion would never have been more than a clever utilitarian scheme for increasing the material goods of life. But these new intellectual powers *have had* a transforming influence upon the desires themselves. The wild animals have probably experienced no great transformation of their strictly limited wants for millions of years but the imagination and reason of man have changed his animal wants into human desires which nothing can completely satisfy and which, when not more or less adequately satisfied, fill his mind with a pain that cannot be easily assuaged. Not only are his desires more intense than those of the animals but he has whole ranges of them which the animals never experience. He is not satisfied for long with crude primitive satis-

factions of his desires but insists on an ever-increasing refinement. No wild animal can sit in judgment on his own desires but man can and in the course of time he organizes his desires, assigns to each its place in the hierarchy so as to produce a harmonious unity and crowns the whole system with a self-sentiment which is capable of subjecting his entire life to its criticism in a way of which there is no hint in the animal kingdom. He projects himself far into the future, sees death coming long before it actually arrives, asks himself what is to become of his values when he is dead and gone and yearns for their eternal conservation. The imagination and reason of man, therefore, do not merely put into his hand new aids to the satisfactions of the old animal wants, but they transform, enlarge, refine, organize and socialize those wants themselves so that the impulse to self-preservation comes to be a human spiritual longing for self-fulfillment, a desire to be a certain kind of man rather than to have a certain kind of object, an overmastering passion to be at one with the highest principle of being.

It is obvious, then, that the cognitive element in religion is very important. Without it there would have been no religion. It not only discovers and symbolizes the objects toward which the religious emotions are directed, but it transforms desire itself from the raw crude impulses of biological preservation into (at the other extreme) the infinite compassion of Jesus and his demand that we be "perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect." No doubt both these activities are the work of imagination rather than of logical reasoning; but imagination, as I have already shown, is an element in cognition and imaginative creations are a form of knowledge.

It is quite correct to say with Moore that the fundamental motive of religion is the impulse to self-preservation but we must put the stress on the *self* that is to be preserved. There may have been a stage in the prehistoric life of man when his self was almost entirely animal and instinctive—we know so little about his origin that any statement we may make about his earliest mentality is pure guessing—but in his history as known to us, there is evident a very genuine evolution of selfhood. Like the new-born child, early man's most obvious interest consists in satisfying his most pressing bodily wants. He desires food, shelter, sex, children, success in war and the chase, etc., and religion first of all is a technique for satisfying these wants. But with a settled economic life and a more stable and complex social organization once attained, his more specifically human wants begin to display themselves and by and by we find him asking of his God or Gods, not material things, but gifts of the spirit, purity of heart, forgiveness for sin, harmony within, union with the divine, power to influence others for their good. He says with Jesus: "Not my will but Thine be done"; or with the Psalmist: "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness"; or with Paul: "The fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness and faith." The demands made upon his Gods by early man are so crude and self-centered that one almost hesitates to think of them as religious at all and thus put them in the same class with the noble utterances just quoted; but the two things belong together nevertheless and the enormous gulf that separates them has actually been crossed by the human spirit "with painful steps and slow" no doubt, and by circuitous paths, but still with real progress toward moral selfhood. Re-

ligion is rooted in the impulse toward self-preservation but the self that man desires to preserve is itself the subject of evolution and it is not even yet known what it shall be.

There is general agreement now among the psychologists who make religious experience their special study that the origin of religion must be sought in the human mind. They would not all assign it the same degree of uniqueness: some would associate it very closely with the ethical and æsthetic impulses; others would tie it up with the metaphysical impulse; others still would try to establish a most intimate relation between it and sex, but they would all unite in looking for its origin in the need and creative activities of the mind itself and not in the traditional source called supernatural revelation. They have their own difficulties in interpreting into purely psychological terms such mysterious religious phenomena as a conversion like that of St. Paul or a mystic experience like that of Plotinus or the tremendous moral power over the consciences of multitudes of men such as was exercised by a St. Francis or a Wesley or a Moody. The difficulties, however, do not discourage them because they do not think of the human mind as a simple mechanism, easily taken apart by thought and put together again, but rather as the most mysterious, complex, unfathomable Achievement of the whole evolutionary process on this earth, a creative Being drawing its life from sources so profound that its future evolution is unpredictable. Thinking thus of the mind they are not surprised when they come upon some religious phenomena that they cannot completely analyze, but nevertheless they feel no need of falling back upon the conventional supernatural for an explanation.

But though the psychologists agree about the psychological origin of religion they differ often in the accounts they give of it as an active agency in life. Two points here are of sufficient interest in current discussions to occupy our attention for a short time—I refer to the question concerning the stimuli that awaken the religious consciousness into activity and the question concerning the relative importance of the social and personal elements in religion.

The question concerning the stimuli that awaken the religious consciousness into activity has been much discussed since the publication of Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. In that book Durkheim contends that the primary object of religious worship is not the world or portions thereof but the society to which the worshiper belongs. All religious entities, all spirits, powers, Gods, etc. are nothing more or less than society divinized. A society is to its members what a God is to his worshipers. It begets in them a sense of their complete dependence, exercises a strict authority over them, compels their obedience to itself, calls upon them in war or other times of danger to sacrifice themselves in its interest, lifts them out of their little sensuous, individualistic selves by the august commands of its morality and the imposing spectacle of its civilization. A religion is nothing else "than a system of ideas with which individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members and the relations they have with it." The advance from polytheism with its many Gods to monotheism with its one supreme God is simply a symbolic representation of the evolution of society from unorganized tribes to a nation with one supreme head. Society itself, therefore, is the model and prototype of Godhead; it is to be

identified with the Sacred and the Divine. No other stimulus to the religious consciousness is needed since this one is great enough to elicit all the responses which we actually find in religion. The public nature of the cult, the inspiration drawn by the religious individual from the excitement and exaltation of the congregation, the intolerance shown by religion toward all innovating individuals who neglect its cult or disbelieve its dogmas, all go to show that the stuff of which religions are made is social through and through.

It is not my intention to follow the ingenious analysis and explanations of primitive tribal festivals by which Durkheim tries to establish this contention that society is the raw material of Godhead. Certainly anyone who tries to fit this theory to the facts of religion which he finds, let us say, in Moore's *History of Religions*, will have his own trouble in doing so. When we are told that the influences which really emanated from the clan were mistakenly located in visible objects like the sun or moon or thunder or other natural phenomena, we cannot resist the feeling that a theory is being imposed on the facts rather than drawn from them. And when we learn that Durkheim acknowledged Comte as his master and shared the latter's view that religion, as actually known to history, was simply primitive science and therefore is now completely outgrown as a live human interest, we understand why he should also follow Comte, who in his later life formulated the Religion of Humanity, by using the familiar and revered name of religion for the cult of the group or the collectivity.

But such an application of the Positivist philosophy does violence to the plain facts of religious history. The religious spirit of man has always been emotionally and imaginatively aware of the greater and lesser

forces of nature, for they pressed in upon him from every angle long before he was able to achieve any conscious feeling for "the spirit of the group." Indeed the history of various societies, both ancient and modern, shows that a common religion is one of the most important of the factors that hold them together. The communistic societies in the United States that have had a strong religious bond have sometimes held together for several decades while those without such a bond have gone on the rocks in a few years or even in a few months. It seems clear, therefore, as Malinowski says "that religion cannot derive its sanctity from that source which itself is made sacred by religion." What elicits the primary religious responses of wonder, admiration, fear, awe, hope and joy is not society but the vast cosmic Reality which man first experiences as a mighty host of heavenly and earthly beings but sooner or later comes to regard as a Cosmos, an eternal Power that rules alike over man and the group to which he belongs. The whole history of religions, with the exception of early Buddhism, cries out against the modern effort to disassociate the religious consciousness from the cosmical and the universal.

It does not follow, however, that nothing can be learned from Durkheim's theory as to the religious significance of society. If society is not the prototype of Godhead, but the cosmos in its inexhaustible vastness and unending mystery is rather to be regarded as such, it is still true that the most significant contents of the Godhead are drawn from the social experience of man. When the notion of physical power as the main attribute of Deity is surrendered and its place taken by spiritual qualities such as righteousness, love, truth, mercy, the change is due to the influence of social ex-

perience on the mind of the worshiper. As the measures with which man metes out the infinite reaches of space and time are all derivative from the inch, the foot, the yard and the pace which correspond to the thumb-bones, the foot-bones, the arm-bones and the leg-bones of a man, so in giving content to the Beings or Being toward whom their worship was directed men ascribed to them inevitably the most revered qualities which they had discovered in themselves and their neighbors. Such an anthropomorphism is inevitable in religion, but it grows more respectable in our thought to-day because we are learning from scientists themselves that man does not escape anthropomorphism even in his science; for in the last analysis, after he has used all the instruments he can devise and read off their pointer-readings, he himself is the measure of all things and can only read himself into things. The only objectivity he can achieve is not that of seeing things from a point of view outside his own nature and experience, but of seeing them from as many points of view as possible and of synthesizing his experiences with those of his peers.

The second question concerns the relative importance of the social and personal elements in religion. This is of more than academic interest, because our answer to it will indicate what store we set by the living personal piety which has played so great a part in the spiritual religions thus far.

Some of the definitions of religion already given will indicate that many students regard the social or cult side of it as of major importance. Professor Ames defines it thus: "Religion is the consciousness of the highest social values." Professor Wright's definition runs in part as follows: "Religion is the endeavor to secure

the conservation of socially recognized values." Indeed all those who have been deeply influenced by Durkheim and his school tend to stress the communal element in religion as its real driving power and the source of the greatest satisfaction the individual gets from it.

There are many facts both in primitive religion and in the religion of our own time that seem to justify this stress on the social side. Among primitive peoples the ceremonies at birth and death, the rites of initiation, the ritual connected with mourning, commemoration, sacrifice and the totemic cult, were all of a public and collective character. The great gatherings of the people for seasonal and periodic feasts held at times of sowing or harvest or at the height of the hunting or fishing seasons afforded occasions for great outbursts of collective religious feeling and served to cement the members of the group together. No doubt people looked forward to them and back upon them as the great occasions in their lives, times when they were lifted out of themselves by the emotional contagion of the crowd and felt themselves possessed of some *mana* which they were not able to command apart from the great gathering. Similarly to-day millions of people associate religion with the crowd-emotion. The hundreds of thousands who have listened with enthusiasm to the Reverend William Sunday during the last twenty years in the United States live, religiously at least, on the primitive psychological level. Such individuals seem to have no power to get any good out of religion save as their minds are stirred through the contagion of the crowd exaltation and the crowd passion.

The followers of Durkheim make the most of these facts and sometimes carry them so far as to suggest that any kind of "collective effervescence" such as the

enthusiasm of a football or baseball crowd is in essence religious. But this emphasis on the social or cult side has brought about a sharp reaction. Professor Whitehead, not a professional student of religion but for all that a man of insight in religious as in many other matters, utters himself on this matter in striking, almost passionate terms:

Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man. . . . All collective emotions leave untouched the awful ultimate fact, which is the human being, consciously alone with itself, for its own sake. . . . Religion is what a man does with his own solitariness. . . . Religion is solitariness; and if you are never solitary, you are never religious . . . The great religious conceptions which haunt the imaginations of civilized mankind are scenes of solitariness; Prometheus chained to his rock, Mahomet brooding in the desert, the meditations of the Buddha, the solitary Man on the Cross. It belongs to the depth of the religious spirit to have felt forsaken, even by God.

These words surely ring true to the experience of deeply religious people of all times. If religion were mainly the performance of collective ritual and the experiencing of collective emotion, how would the great poetical expressions of personal religious experience such as the Hebrew Psalms ever have been written? How would the world's outstanding religious geniuses, like Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Mahomet, etc., ever have founded new religions? Or how would new sects of more or less spiritual significance be constantly springing up in Asia and America now? The values

which individual religious experience discovers must be socially recognized, else they will perish with the first experience; but they are taken up into the ritual and common belief of the group only after they have been experienced by many of its most spiritual and influential members. It is entirely likely that the unique experience of the religious innovator is due to the pressure on his spirit of problems and social situations and inner conflicts which are also affecting others, otherwise he would not be able to make converts or interest others at all; but, apart from the powerful suggestiveness of his experience, his first disciples might never achieve their illumination and emancipation or set out on the new way of life.

Nor can the followers of Durkheim get around the position of Whitehead by contending that such individual experience belongs only to the more developed religions. It is a mistake to suppose that primitive men were all alike or that there were no occasions of solitude in primitive life. Man has always faced death alone; mothers have always borne the pangs of childbirth alone; the pains of wounded love have always been felt by the lover alone; fatal injuries and long-continuing illnesses have been experienced by the victims alone; the wrongdoer, when disciplined by his group, has been alone; the novitiate, about to be initiated into the secrets of his tribe, has had to spend some time in the wilderness alone; the innovating individual has always been at first alone. Human life has always furnished natural and abundant occasions for solitude and there is no reason to suppose that new ideas in religion or government or economics or any other sphere of life did not come to more or less solitary individuals in primitive society just as they do now.

But it is becoming plain that there is no real occasion for the controversy. Religion is neither exclusively individual nor exclusively social but a blend of both. The new visions no doubt come to prophets and seers who are more or less isolated from their groups by their spiritual originality. They are in the group but not entirely of it. But the prophet alone cannot be sure of the truth or value of his new belief. The overwhelming impression it makes on his own mind is all the proof *he* needs. Only the group can determine the value of the new vision. If it can be taken up into the collective ritual and arouse the collective emotion and furnish some guidance to collective conduct it is readily believed to be true. If it cannot, it falls by the wayside as multitudes of crank-ideas fall by the wayside now.

This chapter may be fitly brought to a close by asking again: Why are people religious? I do not mean: Why was primitive man religious? but, Why are people religious now. No doubt a good deal of the ecclesiastical religion of to-day is little more than a hangover from the past. It is a part of people's inherited culture and of their social milieu. They could not feel that they were respectable if they did not join in some form of public worship. Even this type of religion is, we may believe, of some value as a socializing agency. It at least holds people together in groups and generates a feeling for social cohesion, and a society which rapacity, selfish pleasure-seeking and a reckless individualism threaten to tear asunder cannot afford to despise even such conventional and formal bonds. But the religion which people inherit as they inherit a language and whose meaning and worth are guaranteed to them by no emotional or intellectual experience pecu-

liarly their own, has no real promise of life in it for the future. Sooner or later all religions die out unless they can be renewed from within by the influence of powerful and original personalities who, somehow or other, get into vital touch again with the invisible forces by which spiritual energy is generated and stored in individual souls. When these powerful personalities arrive they are religious in their own right. The religious life of many people is like a hillside stream, fed by the rainfall and liable to dry up entirely when the rain ceases to fall; but the religious life of such men as St. Francis, Huss, Luther, George Fox, John Wesley, Thomas Chalmers, Debendrenath Tagore, Ali Mohammed (the Bab) and Sadhu Sundar Singh is rather like a great artesian well, drawing its waters from sources than can neither be exhausted nor discovered.

Our question, then, is: Why are such men as these religious? The old answer ran somewhat as follows: God chose these men out from among their brethren, stirred or purified their souls by supernatural grace, touched their tongues with a live coal from off His own altar, equipped them by a psychological miracle with powers not possessed by any merely natural mind and then used them for His own supernatural ends. This answer plainly attempts no psychological analysis. For those who have been accustomed to give it, there has been no psychological problem at all. The whole experience for them takes place in the realm of supernatural grace and therefore cannot be explained in any ordinary sense of that word. But such an answer has to be regarded now, by the psychologist at least, as a mere evasion of an inevitable question. The psychologist does not pretend to be able to dissect the living

soul in its great creative experiences as one dissects a guinea pig in the biological laboratory. But he does think that he can divine by sympathetic insight some of the mental processes out of which the religious consciousness arises.

The key to the understanding of the religious consciousness is to be found in consciousness itself. When are we most completely conscious? When we are confronted by novel or difficult or painful or disappointing or desperately urgent situations. Apart from such situations as these, our life is controlled by unconscious automatic activities, reflexes, instincts and habits. But when perplexing situations appear, the conscious mind springs into activity and tries to meet the new demands.

Now, the most baffling, distressing, spirit-shaking situations by which man is confronted when once he has begun to desire and to pursue the more ideal values are of a twofold nature. First, they spring out of the conflicts between the different elements of his own nature. Man has all the natural desires of the animal and these, too, intensified and kept in a constant state of excitement by the free play of his imagination about them and by the increased possibility of satisfying them due to the ingenuity of his reason. But through the very abundance and intensity of his desires they cannot always be satisfied and the pain of his dissatisfaction stings him awake, arouses him to the consciousness that there is another side of his being besides his clamorous bodily appetites. He first becomes self-conscious through his pain and then in the course of time discovers values and ideals that make him regard all animal pleasures as mere instruments to higher ends. But such a victory of his higher nature over his lower

is not easily won. It is a long uphill fight both for the race and the individual. This fight is not shared with man by the animals, although they do share his self-preservative and reproductive instincts, because their inner life is not torn asunder by the warfare of two opposing principles. They have the peace of a nature that has not yet been disturbed by the restless energy of self-conscious spirit. But with the introduction of self-consciousness into man's life, the natural instinctive balance of his inherited animal nature is destroyed. The instincts are aroused into excessive life by the stimulus of imagination and this increased demand for satisfaction is met by the stern opposition of society and of a newly awakened element in his own being. In this strife between his lower nature and his higher nature more or less backed by society, the individual soon discovers his tragic weakness and his need of moral reinforcement and is ready to cry out with St. Paul: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

But this strife between the lower nature and the new conscious self is not man's only trouble. There is also a strife within the self itself. He soon discovers that the self, like the sensuous nature, makes demands that cannot be satisfied. His dreams, aspirations and ambitions are out of all relation to his possibilities. He wants to know the true inwardness of things but soon runs up against the limitations of his own mind and seeming antinomies, contradictions and surds in the nature of the universe. At one moment he is eager to hurl himself into the active life and express himself in deeds and burning words and ardent love but another element in his nature, more passive, timid and contemplative, holds him back and keeps him in a state of

chronic perplexity and distress. One part of his higher nature seems to block another. He wants to believe and get the moral drive that comes from faith and yet he is ashamed to believe where he cannot demonstrate. He wants to love and yet he is afraid to assume the risks of loving. He wants to be free and yet he seems caught in the meshes of his own mechanistic thinking. Often he becomes hopelessly self-involved, preys on his own mind and does nothing worth while because of the very abundance of his talents. He cannot deliver himself from his self-involvement by mere reflective thinking any more than he can lift his body by his own bootstraps, and through this often overwhelming sense of helplessness he finds himself in the mood to be reinforced by some agency that is more than human.

But there is another conflict still, this time not between differing elements within man's own nature, but between man's self-conscious ego and the vast material universe outside of him. With the arrival of self-consciousness, man soon discovers that the universe, in many of its aspects at least, seems coldly indifferent to him and in the end inevitably crushes him. Now and then the mighty forces of the universe—an earthquake, an erupting volcano, a mighty rain and flood, a devastating tornado, a tempest at sea, a fearful electric storm, a drought—seem to be aiming at his destruction. Against the mightiest of these forces, his strongest defenses are in vain and even against the more common enemies of disease and decay he fights in the long run a losing battle. His earthly end is a narrow grave. And yet powerful as nature's forces are and hostile as they sometimes seem, he cannot prostrate himself before the omnipotence of mere things. He knows he is a mere reed, physically considered, but he knows also

that these mighty physical forces exhibit only the crude, simple, primitive organizations and movements of the substance of the world, while his body and mind are the latest terrestrial achievement of the whole evolutionary process. And so a spirit within him, at first timid and weak, but growing ever braver and stronger, dares to affirm to itself its sense of its own worth even in the presence of these vast cosmic forces. He knows that there is something of unique value in him that is not in them and though they form his environment and without them he could not either exist or live, he does not hesitate to declare that they do not explain him or to believe that the real source of that spirit which makes him a man and not a blind force or a beast is something in the universe that does not appear to the senses, something that reveals itself rather in the very spiritual qualities which set him apart from the rest of creation.

Religion is born in man's soul out of this double conflict—the struggle between nature and spirit in his own breast and the struggle between his self-conscious ego and the vast physical universe which, while it is the background and the basis of his life, seems in so many of its more mechanical and threatening aspects profoundly alien to what is most human and worthwhile in human nature. In its essential nature religion is not an intellectual speculation about the constitution of the universe or an elaborate ritual by which the priests hypnotize us into the belief that their services are indispensable to our salvation here and hereafter but rather a moral act of confidence in the meaning and purpose of life, a faith that the universe, whose children we are, contains the elements than can satisfy in some way our deepest aspirations. In being religious

we do not merely yield to an atavistic tendency, although many traditional-minded persons may be religious simply because their ancestors were; rather in being religious we reach out to stabilize, elevate and complete our lives by laying hold upon the divine creative agency that is the constitutive principle in the evolving, ongoing, but orderly process of Reality.

CHAPTER IV

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION AS MOMENTS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

The belief in special divine revelation plays an important rôle in most of the great historical religions. It evidently satisfied some need that was deeply and widely felt. In India the theory of the priests attributed not only the early hymns of the Rig Veda but the whole sacred literature to revelation in the most literal sense of the word. Zoroaster believed that Ahura Mazda had revealed to him what man should believe and how he should live, and that it was his mission to proclaim this revelation to his fellow men. The later Greek philosophical schools, such as Neo-Pythagoreanism and the later Platonism, believed their masters Pythagoras and Plato to have been inspired and their writings to be genuine revelations. The Oriental mysteries that were so influential in the early Roman Empire offered the people truths that had come from a higher source than the mere human mind. The idea of revelation has been the cornerstone of orthodox Judaism for nearly twenty-five hundred years. This revelation concerned what man must do rather than what he must think or believe; it took the form of the Law, rather than of dogmas or eternal truths but it was nevertheless believed to be a genuine revelation, given to the Jews alone whom God had specially chosen as

his favorite people. Mohammed's teaching concerning revelation was probably derived from current Jewish and Christian conceptions of it, but, though derivative, it was accompanied, no doubt, by a sincere belief in its truth. He taught that God sent down to him from time to time by the hand of Gabriel "Korans" or texts which were copied from a heavenly original of which God himself was the author. The Prophet repeated these "Korans" to his followers who learned the words by heart or wrote them down and after his death compiled them in a single volume called the Koran. Christianity has probably gone further in developing the idea of revelation than any other religion. Not only does it accept the Jewish Old Testament and its own peculiar Scriptures, the New Testament, as inspired, but it goes so far as to regard the Church's interpretation of the revealed scriptures as itself inspired; and even comparatively late doctrines such as the deity of Christ, the incarnation, the atonement and the second coming of Christ are treated as revelations.

The concept of revelation has always been held with a firmer grip than the concept of inspiration. Religious people have been perfectly certain that their scriptures were revealed, that is, came to them from some supernatural source rather than from the fallible mind of man; but they have not been so sure of the process by which the revelation was made known. The prophets of the Old Testament preface most of their discourses with the phrase "Thus saith the Lord" and their visions with the phrase "The Lord showed me"; but just how conventional these phrases were or what exactly they meant by them, it would be hard to say. Mohammed and other unimaginative people who had little if any insight into the working of the human mind, especially

on its so-called subconscious levels, conceived the process of inspiration in semi-mechanical terms. Mohammed taught, as we have seen, that the angel Gabriel handed him "Korans" or texts copied from a book in Heaven and many Christian theologians have conceived of the writers of the Bible as mere penmen of the Holy Spirit. Wooden-minded fanatics can believe almost anything that confirms them in their prejudices, but the marked individuality of the different writers of the Bible compelled Christians with more flexibility of mind to abandon the mechanical conception and to substitute for it the idea that the Scriptural writers, while conscious of and actively concerned in the process of inspiration, were in their inspired moments subject to the suggestions and control of the Holy Spirit. Other theologians, reaching out for a still more psychological description of the process, believed that the writers received their message when in a state of sublime ecstasy, that is, when the ordinary mind with all its unspiritual, temporal, and carnal interests was quiescent and the higher mind was free to receive, more or less passively, the truths that were communicated to it. But however the process was conceived, the inspired persons were believed to utter truths that were not their own, and therefore truths to be accepted without any of the uncertainty or testing that generally accompany our reception of judgments arrived at in the ordinary way.

The motives that lay behind these doctrines of revelation and inspiration are not hard to divine. Priests are always ready to fortify their position of domination over human minds by ascribing a more-than-human origin to the system of worship, belief and conduct which they administer. They cannot often guarantee the validity of their beliefs or demonstrate the utility

of their ceremonies and offices by pointing to immediate consequences in the material world or to enhanced states of well-being in the worshiper's own mind, but they can command the obedience of unreflective people so long as they can persuade them that the beliefs and conduct imposed on them are of divine origin and, therefore, carry with them supernatural authority.

But the desire of priests to fortify their position of authority in society is far from telling the whole story. There is a natural craving in man for intellectual certainty in matters of great import, just as there is a natural craving to have money and to have it invested in gilt-edged securities. Especially is this the case in all periods of skepticism and among peoples who have lost the freshness and originality of the more youthful races and have little confidence in their own innate spiritual powers. There is nothing that decaying periods of history crave more ardently than protection from their own doubts, and no device known to man can give this protection so surely as belief in revelation. A spiritual genius like George Fox can trust in his own subjective certainties, but a natural skeptic like John Henry Newman cannot achieve spiritual certainty outside the Roman Catholic church and belief in scriptural revelation. Only strong souls can be genuine Quakers and draw enough assurance about the essential spirituality of life from their own experience to make their lives strong and confident. For timid souls not even the experience of the race is enough to fortify their faith; they need someone to rise from the dead or to come to them with a guarantee from another realm of being before they can trust his message.

But these motives for the belief in revelation and inspiration are after all derivative and secondary, com-

pared with the motive with which I propose to deal in this chapter, namely, the psychological experience which suggested the belief in the first place. We may pretty generally take it for granted that when a belief is spread widely over the earth there is some experiential basis for it. The interpretation may be entirely wrong but the experience which occasions the interpretation is likely to be genuine and recurrent. That there is a real psychological basis for the belief about inspiration as a process and revelation as the truth achieved by that process, no one who has ever studied the psychology of creative genius can doubt for a moment. Inspiration is a fact but it is a fact of a psychological and not of a supernatural order. The inspiration of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus and Paul is not natural in the sense in which breathing, eating and reproducing are natural. All these latter functions are physiological and are carried on just as successfully by the lowliest members of the animal kingdom as by us. But religious inspiration is natural in a higher sense. It is a function of the human mind in the highest reaches of its exploratory and creative activity, just as music, poetry, drama and the architecture of the great temples and cathedrals are similar functions. But it differs from these other functions in the fact that the human need which lies behind it is more universal, more poignant, more urgent than the needs which lie behind them, and in the other equally important fact that the mind which functions in it is more total, more daring, more far-reaching, more self-affirming, more revelatory of its own quality of infinity than the mind which functions in the other creative activities.

One who undertakes to say anything favorable concerning inspiration as a significant human experience

soon makes for himself both friends and enemies, and probably the friends are more embarrassing than the enemies. So many people are anxious to avoid the pain and trouble of conscious thought, so many "psychics" and "clairvoyants" and "mediums" are looking for confirmation of their much-prized gifts, that they eagerly accept any word that strengthens them in their hope and faith that there is a shorter cut to valuable truth about life than the slow and toilsome road of observation, comparison and generalization. But it is impossible to prevent such eager believers from making an uncritical use of any judgment that encourages them in their beliefs and practices. It is the other group that I am concerned with here—those who are so wedded to the method of science, the method of observation, comparison and generalization, that they cannot be persuaded that any more interior method of arriving at the truth is possible or desirable. To them, such words as inspiration, intuition, revelation, vision, etc., are, if not full brothers and sisters, at least first cousins, to dreams, illusions and hallucinations. Truth for them is so completely confined to that type of knowledge which can be expressed in words, formulas and equations that they fail to recognize that there may be a reason which cannot give reasons, a certainty that is moral and intuitive rather than scientific and legal, a trust that is both unquestioning and justified but which has no other guarantee than the fact that our minds are built in a certain way and yield themselves to faith as naturally as the flowers yield themselves to the sun and the rain. Such minds perhaps will see nothing in religious inspiration or prophecy that is worth discussing. They are the victims of modern academic, professional and industrial specialisms. But if they would study the process by

which the great creations of human genius in music, poetry, the drama, architecture, sculpture and painting are brought into being, they would get a new respect for the inspired prophet and the religious founder.

He who would understand inspiration must take a large and generous view of the mind. Many academic persons to-day seem to think that the place where one can learn all about the mind is the psychological laboratory. But while the psychological laboratory has certainly given us a firmer grip on the details of many of our mental processes, it is not there that we shall see the mind in its highest functioning. In the psychological laboratory we study white rats, young children and the less subtle mental activities of the adult mind-brain; but the mind at its best is to be seen only in the field of history, where, under the concrete stimuli of life itself, it performs its wonders and achieves its greatest creations. When one speaks of mind, many people immediately think of that something which the behaviorists find it so hard to discover when they are analyzing the behavior of human creatures into its elementary processes. But what we really mean by mind, when we speak of it in ordinary discourse, is that creative activity, however it may be related to the nervous system, which has produced the *Iliad* of Homer, the Parthenon at Athens, the civilization of Rome, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the Gothic Cathedrals, the plays of Shakespeare, the symphonies of Beethoven, the operas of Wagner, the philosophies of Kant and Hegel, the sciences of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, and the thousand and one other human creations which, without the human mind, would never have come into being at all. When we try to explain the mind by analyzing it into something else than itself, it does seem

to slip through our fingers and escape like air or mist or shadow; but when we see it functioning in history, building up economic systems and civilizations, creating the arts, sciences and philosophies, inventing the telegraph, the telephone, radio, the automobile and the aeroplane, we seem to grasp it again in all its concreteness and to feel that it is the most real thing in the world. These activities show not only that the mind is an active being, but also that it is forever expressing itself in fresh creations and that its future activity is quite unpredictable. The mind itself is more wonderful than all its creations and can be studied successfully only by those who bring to their study an adequate sense of its greatness and mystery as seen in its own long evolution, in its immense achievements thus far and in its eternal questing for more knowledge and diviner expressions of its own inner creative activity. He who brings such a conception of the mind as this to the study of religious inspiration will have no difficulty in believing that it may be one of the mind's most wonderful and worthful achievements.

It is commonly conceded now that the mind is more than consciousness, and in that more lies the secret of inspiration. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the conscious life is responsible for our science, our industry, our finance, our transportation, the form if not the reality of our government, the organization of our education, etc. Imagination plays its part in the origination of these activities, no doubt; but, once started, their further evolution is mainly a matter of conscious judging and reasoning. But beneath the conscious level of life a vast deal of subconscious or half-conscious activity is carried on. We need not accept everything taught by modern psychoanalysis or psychotherapy to

be sure that the mind is immensely active at levels over which we have no conscious control. The dramatic quality of our dreams might have taught us at any time in the past that the subconscious mind was strangely inventive; but these newer types of psychology have explored the lower levels of the mind, more deliberately and scientifically than ever before, by hypnosis, psychoanalysis, crystal-gazing, the planchet, the ouija-board, the study of sudden conversions, the observation and analysis of mediumship, alternating personalities and other abnormal phenomena.

Now one upshot of this fresh study of the subconscious is that we know a little more about the inspiration that precedes creative activity than we did before. I do not mean that we know much more about the neural process that accompanies it or that we can control it any better than our fathers did, but only that we can describe its characteristics a little more completely than they.

For one thing, inspiration does not seem to depend on the individual will. Even those to whom it does come now and then have no power to compel or coax or trick it into activity in those periods of psychic dullness and unproductiveness which seem to come to all creative spirits. As Walt Whitman says: "We must loaf and invite the soul." The will may drive itself to the tasks of commerce, industry, government, the making of dictionaries, the writing of editorials, and the recital of academic lectures, but not to the creation of lyrics or operas or great plays or significant inventions.

Again, when the inspiration does come, it makes a sudden eruption into consciousness. No doubt this quick flare-up of creativity is always prepared for by

a long subconscious process of combining, associating and experimenting, accompanied by emotional fermentation, but the conscious mind which takes part in the objective creation knows nothing of the subconscious incubation. George Sand tells us that in the case of Chopin "creation was spontaneous, miraculous; he wrought without foreseeing. It would come complete, sudden, sublime." Du Bois Raymond says: "In the course of my life I have had some happy thoughts and I have often noted that they would come to me involuntarily and when I was not thinking of the subject." Robert Louis Stevenson has given us a whimsical and delightful account of how he conceived the creative process to take place in his own mind in his "Chapter on Dreams." But the most illuminating of all accounts of inspiration, so far as the two characteristics of it already mentioned are concerned, is the oft-quoted one of Mozart:

My ideas come as they will, I don't know how, all in a stream. If I like them I keep them in my head and people say that I often hum them over to myself. Well, if I can hold on to them, they begin to join on to one another. And now my soul gets heated and if nothing disturbs me, the piece grows larger and brighter until, however long it is, it is all finished at once in my mind, so that I can see it at a glance. Then I don't hear the notes one after another, as they are hereafter to be played but it is as if in my fancy they were all one at once. And that is a revel. While I'm inventing, it all seems to me like a fine vivid dream; but that hearing it all at once (when the invention is done), that's the best. What I have

once so heard I forget not again and perhaps that is the best gift that God has granted.

A third characteristic of inspiration is the feeling of the subject of it that the whole process is impersonal, that a power other than his conscious self is using him for its own ends. Wordsworth, for example, speaks about the pen being taken out of his hand and the lines written for him by another and the sudden rise of this poet from the general prosy level of his long poems to the beautiful and sublime passages occurring now and then in them would seem to bear out his statement. Philo, whom one would not ordinarily think of as an inspired man, nevertheless says of himself:

Sometimes when I come to my work empty, I have suddenly become full; ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon me and implanted in me from on high; so that, through the influence of divine inspiration, I have become greatly excited and have known neither the place in which I was nor those who were present nor myself nor what I was saying nor what I was writing, for then I have been conscious of a richness of interpretation, an enjoyment of light, a most penetrating insight, a most manifest energy in all that was to be done; having such effect on my mind as the clearest ocular demonstration would have on the eyes.

Whatever havoc his most recent biographer may have played with our earlier regard for Henry Ward Beecher, he was at least a preacher of immense inspirational power. He describes his personal experience as follows:

There are times when it is not I that is talking; when I am caught up and carried away so that I know not whether I am in the body or out of the body; when I think things in the pulpit I could never think in the study; when I have feelings that are so different from any that belong to the lower or normal condition that I can neither regulate them or understand them. I see things and hear sounds and seem, if not in the seventh heaven, yet in a condition which leads me to apprehend what Paul said, that he heard things that it was not possible for a man to utter.

Many other illustrations of these three characteristics of inspiration might be quoted but these are enough to indicate how it appears to those who are the subjects of it. Obviously it is a deeply subjective, interior phenomenon of the mental life. It always involves an accelerated mental activity. This quickening of the mental speed may be due to the use of drugs, wine, music and the dance or to strong emotion arising out of passionate interest in some loved object. The result of this accession of psychic energy is a great quickening of the ordinary reaction-time. The whole mind, conscious and subconscious, seems to be awakened into activity and the subject has swift access to and command over vast ranges of his stored-up experience. As Webster said of himself after his great speech against Payne, so the subject of inspiration generally is able to say that all he has heard or seen or read or thought or felt rushes up from the subconscious depths and fills consciousness to overflowing. And not only is his own past experience brought within easy access, but the deeper, older, more racial levels of the mind

are reached by the excitement; and the inspired person seems to be the voice of his race, speaking out of an experience richer and wider than his own and for a future that extends away beyond the span of his own possible life. The great poets and patriotic orators are never mere individuals. They sum up whole epochs of human history or they give form and power to the sentiment of a whole group of people. Homer absorbs into himself the whole early civilization of Greece, Virgil represents the Augustan age of Rome, Dante is the voice of the middle ages, Shakespeare incarnates in his drama the new life, energy, daring, color, romance and exuberance of the Elizabethan age. The great orators of Greece and Rome and England and America have arisen in periods when the public mind was immensely stirred by some issue on which the destiny of their country was felt to depend. The inspired person never feels that he is speaking for himself alone as the philosopher and scientist are apt to feel. An older, more racial, more passionate, more authoritative mind speaks through him. And the experience is so overwhelming and the results of it are often so much beyond the subject's normal ability that he is very apt to ascribe it to a personified Nature or a Muse or the Spirit of the race or the Spirit of the time or to some other subject more comprehensive than his own personality.

Does this account of inspiration in general throw any light upon the religious or prophetic inspiration which plays so great a part in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures? If ever men deserved to be called inspired, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah and many of the Psalmists of the Old Testament and Jesus and Paul

in the New Testament certainly did. But it has been contended by the orthodox theologian that while the forms of inspirations thus far discussed are purely of a psychological nature, the inspiration of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments was entirely supernatural. If this were the case, they would belong to a different order of spiritual being and no light could be thrown from the former upon the latter. This is exactly the historical position of Judaism and the Christian church. They have preferred to leave prophecy in a divine impenetrable obscurity rather than run the risk of lowering its value by finding analogues in other forms of inspiration that might make it more intelligible. Whereas in other realms of study we understand by analyzing, noticing likenesses and differences, bringing the new under the old or revising the old so as to explain the new, in the realm of Jewish and Christian history we are supposed to understand prophetic inspiration best by claiming that it is *sui generis*, by refusing to compare it with any other form of inspiration and by foregoing all effort at psychological analysis of a spiritual power so sacred and mysterious.

Now, as has been said before, the psychologist does not pretend to analyze the processes that go on in the human soul in its most inspired and creative moments, as an animal body is dissected in the biological laboratory. He does not claim to have any "open sesame" to the most complex and subtle experiences of the human spirit. He does not undertake to say how the human mind came to be or how it achieves its great experiences any more than the biologist undertakes to say how the little, single, fertilized cell can grow into the infinitely diverse psychophysical organism called a hu-

man being. He might be willing to admit that the ultimate explanation of our mental and spiritual life is to be found by regarding it as an influx from the Divine Mind, but he does insist and for given reasons that the inspiration of the prophet is rooted in a psychological process, just as certainly as the inspiration of the poet, musician, preacher and inventor. In each case the process may be unique, for nature never entirely repeats herself but is always intent on unending diversity; but all the forms of inspiration are ways in which the human mind functions in its effort to penetrate the nature of reality or to transform reality so as the better to achieve its ends. Aspects of Biblical prophecy which to a former generation seemed entirely mysterious and divine are now known to the student to be common to most of the so-called natural religions and some of them to be not exclusively religious at all. The notion of revelation, for example, is common in the religious world. As Brinton says: "Prophets and shamans, evangelists and Indian medicine-men, all claim and all claim with honesty, to be moved by the God within, the *deus in nobis*, and to speak the word of the Lord." Dreams, visual and auditory hallucinations and premonitions of the future are found everywhere. Even the divine call is not without parallels in other religions. All these accompaniments of the prophetic gift among the Hebrews, which have seemed so wonderful to uncritical readers of the Scriptures, are the common trappings of seership among all religious peoples not crushed by a repressive and conventional priesthood. The unique element in Hebrew prophecy is its vision of a higher range of moral values and its moral transformation of the idea of God, but grand as this achievement is and wide-reaching as has been its

influence on Jews and Christians, it is not without parallels, on a lower level of value and intensity, among other peoples. The moral life of all civilized peoples has evolved to some degree and every new stage of its evolution was due, no doubt, to some inspired person or persons. Just why the inspired prophets of Israel rose to greater heights of moral power and to a more piercing vision of moral values than the prophets of other nations the psychologist certainly cannot explain, but his failure to give a satisfactory explanation of this difference ought not to be held up as a reproach against him and his methods, any more than the failure of the anthropologist to explain why races differ or the failure of the geologist to explain why the Himalayas are higher than the Alps or the Rockies are held up as reproaches against them.

But though the psychologist does not claim to lay bare the exact process by which new moral intuitions have been arrived at by great prophetic personalities like Isaiah and Jeremiah or Jesus and Paul, he is sure that his method of approach to the study of the prophets is theoretically sound and practically valuable.

For example, he would study such facts about the lives of the prophets and such writings as have come down from them, with a view to finding out as much as possible about their temperament, their mental processes, their emotional sensibilities and the stimuli which their social situation brought to bear upon them. Approaching the prophets in this way, he soon discovers that they are essentially poets. Their language has a rhythmical movement and a wealth of imagery that only high poetic feeling and imagination can give. If the poetic form into which they cast their speech is free and easy-fitting and does not call for that

mastery of poetic structure which we prize so highly in the great epic poets of the world, still the prophetic literature of both Old and New Testaments contains some of the world's sublimest poetry. But prophecy is always more than poetry. The prophets are poets because they cannot help it. The poet may be an idle singer of an empty day, the prophet never. He does not speak because exercising the creative imagination gives him a high kind of pleasure. He takes his life and his prophetic mission so seriously that care for mere literary form or creation for its own sake would seem to him a profanation of his high calling. He is a deeply introverted man and dreams dreams, hears voices and sees visions, so real is his own brooding thought to him. He has a temperament in which high excitability goes hand in hand with fearless courage. He is not a patriot in our modern sense, for he has no experience of the democratic state; but he identifies himself with his people and his most passionate desire is to save them from an evil destiny. He stands at the very opposite pole from that modern individualism which gathers its goods about it and leaves the rest of the world to its fate.

We all know what it is to have our spiritual being dispersed over so many interests that we hardly seem to be one personality at all and we also know moments of intense spiritual concentration when our whole being seems to mobilize itself at the call of duty or destiny. Well! the prophets of Israel, including Jesus and Paul, represent these moments of intense moral and spiritual concentration in the life of Israel, the most intense moral moments the Western world has known. They typify the moral and spiritual nature of man stripped of most of its usual wrappings such as superstition, in-

tellectual dogma and proud ecclesiasticism, keyed up to the top limit of its psychic energy and throwing itself, in an abandon of trust, upon the naked *right* of the world. Never have men illustrated more completely that "one with God is a majority."

But even if this inner nature of the prophets were completely known to us, we could not understand them without putting them in their proper social environment. The prophetic message is not a cool philosophical discourse suitable to any time or place—it is the response of the living soul of the prophet to a definite social situation. At almost any time in the history of Israel during the eighth, seventh and sixth centuries B. C. an overwhelming doom was threatening the people. Indeed doom fell again and again and seldom were the people able to draw a free breath beyond a few short years. In the time of Jesus the sense of oppression lay deep in every patriotic Jewish breast. Throughout the whole Roman Empire of the first century A. D. peoples had lost their ancient liberties at the hands of Rome and lived either in deep despair or in a half-dead, half-alive way or in a state of skeptical and callous indifference. It was this kind of social world, a world which very few in America could even picture in their minds with any vividness to-day, which pressed down upon the intense, susceptible, imaginative, religious nature of the prophets and brought to realization and expression their belief in the right and their faith in its ultimate triumph in the world. In the burning flame of that faith, the old primitive conception of God as mere Might and capricious jealous Will was burned away and in its place there rose the most lofty conception of God that the world has yet attained to—the thought of Him as moral goodness and yearn-

ing love. This latter conception we do not find in full bloom until we come to Jesus and the Gospels, but whatever else Jesus may have been, he was at least a Jewish prophet and his faith is the natural flowering of the faith of his earlier prophetic brethren.

In a later chapter we shall see how strong has been the demand that persons and ideas should prove their authenticity by some sign or authority or guarantee, foreign to the person or idea in question. The same demand has been made on the prophets. The traditional faith of the church in them has been based, not so much on the power of the prophetic message over the consciences of those who read them, but on the supposed power of the prophets to foresee events that were not to take place until hundreds of years after. It is surprising that enlightened people with the New Testament in their hands should still insist on such external authentication. When the Jews came to Jesus, asking for a sign from Heaven that they might believe in him, he replied: "An evil generation seeketh after a sign but no sign will be given it." The Fourth Gospel also represents him as saying: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." St. Paul sharply complains that "the Jews require a sign." All such demands for a sign, whether in the first century or in the twentieth, mark the low ebb of genuine moral and spiritual intuition. Spiritual truth can receive no external authentication. It must demonstrate itself to us either by its power over our subjective minds or by its pragmatic value as an agency of control and direction in our lives or by both. And the surest proof that the great prophets of the Old and New Testaments were inspired is the fact that they still have the power to lift those who sincerely meditate on their words to

higher moral and spiritual levels of conduct and insight and that when communities fall away from their teaching and pay little heed to righteousness, justice, mercy and consecrated living, social chaos always follows. There can be no greater proof of the truth of any cognitive principle than that its truth must be assumed if any other judgment is to be considered true; so there can be no greater proof of the truth of moral and spiritual intuitions like those of the prophets than that if we do not act on them, human living becomes well-nigh impossible.

CHAPTER V

MYSTICISM, ITS LIMITS AND PRESENT POSSIBILITIES

A roll-call of the mystics of the Western world would include many of the most famous names known to history. They would come from most of the European nations and would represent the classical culture of the pre-Christian era as well as the Greek, Roman, Protestant and Liberal forms of Christianity. Plato would lead the list and with him would be grouped such men as St. Clement, Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichus and the Pseudo-Dionysius, the mythical hero of mysticism. From the Latin church would come its greatest representative, Augustine, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and Hugo and Richard of St. Victor. Italy would be represented by the mighty names of St. Francis, Dante, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Catherine of Genoa. Germany would follow with her famous trio of the fourteenth century Eckart, Tauler and Suso and at a later period with her unique shoemaker, Jacob Boehme. Her neighbor Flanders would send her hardly less famous trio, Ruysbroeck, Groot and Thomas à Kempis. From Spain during the period of the Counter-Reformation, of which she was the political and military head, would come the three passionate champions of Rome and the Papacy, St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, St. Teresa, the most famous seeress of the Roman Cath-

olic church and St. John of the Cross, the most extreme of all the Christian ascetics. Strange to say, the haughty, domineering, powerful France of Louis XIV would be represented by the quietistic mystics, Madame Guyon, Fénelon and their followers. From the far north, Sweden would send her strange son, Swedenborg. The inner piety of Protestant England would be voiced by George Fox, Henry Vaughan, the Cambridge Platonists, William Law and William Blake. And last of all the religious liberalism of America would be represented by Emerson and Whitman. Some of these names probably do not mean much to those who are not professional students of church history, but most of them are known to cultivated people wherever the Christian tradition is a vital part of general culture.

Of course this list of mystics includes only a few of the greater names. The number of religious people who have had mystical experiences or who have tried hard to achieve them has been legion. Few people, either Roman Catholic or Protestant, know how vast a literature, published and unpublished, the mystics have produced. They describe their experiences as ineffable, that is, as beyond the power of words to express them as mere ideas can be expressed, but that has not prevented them from writing voluminous manuscripts. As Carlyle published more than thirty volumes of vigorous, declamatory prose to preach his gospel of silence, so the mystics pour out word upon word and heap up figure upon figure in a vain effort to express the inexpressible.

A generation ago little interest was taken in these writings, in Protestant circles at least. One might spend his three years in a theological seminary without

hearing the word mysticism mentioned. But for various reasons the last three decades have witnessed a great change. Many of the mystical writings formerly inaccessible have been published or translated and selections have been made from them which have brought their essential teachings within easy reach. A whole library of fresh books on mysticism in general, on individual mystics and on the psychology and philosophy of mysticism has come into existence in Germany, France, England and America. Theologians, philosophers, preachers and artists have been about equally interested in the new theme. The interest in mysticism is in the air, as it were, and we all feel ourselves more or less compelled to pass judgment on the possibility and value of the mystical experience in the life of America to-day.

On this as on other vital issues students have not been able to agree. On the one hand, such distinguished writers as Baron von Hügel, Miss Underhill and Rufus M. Jones can hardly find words too eulogistic or glowing or tender in which to express their sense of the need and value of mysticism both as a study and as an experience in our materialistic, mechanized, externalized present-day world. On the other hand, thorough students of historical mysticism such as Mrs. Burr, Leuba, Coe and others are equally convinced that mysticism in its most characteristic forms is nothing but religious extravaganza—from the knowledge standpoint pure illusion, from the ethical standpoint a slackening rather than an energizing of the will and from the spiritual standpoint a source of pride and self-centeredness where it does not descend lower and become a stimulus to the sensuous nature. William Morgan speaks of its profundity as “a sham pro-

fundity"; George Santayana says: "Mysticism is not a religion but a religious disease," while William James, in one of his more critical moments, exclaims: "A saint in ecstasy is as motionless, irresponsive and one-idea'd as a melancholiac." Plainly, then, a reinterpretation of religion will involve a fresh effort to understand and evaluate this old form of experience and this old theory of knowledge that has sprung into such vigorous life among us.

In beginning our examination of mysticism there are three things that ought to be remembered. In the first place, a mystic experience deliberately sought is likely to be less significant than one occurring spontaneously. This principle frees us from the painful necessity of examining the larger part of mystical writings. The mystical theory of knowledge, for example, has come almost entirely from a small collection of writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius about 500 A. D. who got it from Neo-Platonism and it has been handed on from century to century with very little change. The experience which this theory of knowledge undertakes to interpret has no doubt occurred more spontaneously, but even here imitation has played a large part. The very phrase "The Mystic Way" indicates that people sought the experience deliberately as miners seek the gold-fields. Some spiritual prospector had made a great discovery; he had told others about the insight, joy and hope he had attained through it and then spiritually starved souls eagerly tried to follow in his footsteps. It seems to us to-day about as absurd to formulate rules for attaining a mystic experience as for writing poetry or falling in love, but people have certainly not always thought that way about mysticism. It follows, then, that a vast deal of mystical experience teaches

us nothing as to its original nature. We must go straight to the fountain head, that is, to those experiences which occur spontaneously such as those of Plotinus, Jacob Boehme, George Fox or, in more recent times and with less religious significance, those of Walt Whitman, Dr. Maurice Bucke and the author of *Twenty Minutes of Reality*.

In the second place, a mystic experience occurring in a nature intellectually and volitionally feeble will have less significance than one occurring in a nature of strong mental and volitional powers. This principle also frees us from much toilsome reading. Few mystics, let us hope, have been as stupid as M. M. Alacoque who is said to have continued standing at the convent gate to keep the pigs out of the garden long after the animals had been made into sausages; but in thousands of cases the excessive emotionalism which is the core of the mystic experience has produced in persons naturally passive and intellectually feeble a stupefaction which makes anything they may say of no real significance. We may find out all that throws genuine light on the mystical experience by confining ourselves not merely to those in whom it occurs spontaneously, but, among these, to persons of marked intellectual power.

Finally, the mystic experience is profoundly affected by the presuppositions and spiritual background of the experient. The background of Plotinus is very different from that of monks and nuns, the background of the German mystics of the fourteenth century is very different from that of the Spanish mystics of the sixteenth century, the theosophical background of Jacob Boehme and the religious background of George Fox are very different from the background of Emerson, Whitman and Bucke in democratic America. The

moral of this is that all that the mystics report as having been revealed to them in their mystical experiences, must not be ascribed to their mysticism. Undoubtedly, whatever original insight some mystics may have achieved, most of them took their theological beliefs all ready-made into their experience. Hence a generous amount of winnowing must be done before we reach what is genuinely mystical in mysticism.

Readers of the Bible, long familiar with the writings of the prophets, the book of Job, the Gospels and the letters of Paul, feel themselves in a different world when they turn to the writings of the mystics. In spite of a few difficulties, due to a corrupt text or an obscure historical reference, or a change in the meaning of words, or a bad arrangement, or the use by the Bible writers of an antiquated psychology or cosmology or philosophy of history, the Bible can be read by those really interested in it with ease and intelligent understanding. The psychological process called inspiration, dealt with in the previous chapter, exalted as well as excited the mind and gave it full command of its resources, both of thought and expression, so that the inspired man uttered his convictions with a directness, simplicity, elevation and, now and then, sublimity of language which men who write out of mere knowledge never attain. But, whereas inspiration excites and exalts the mind, mysticism seems rather to stir it up from the bottom, as it were, to confuse its normal thought-processes and to dam up its usual channels of expression so that, while it utters itself voluminously enough, it gasps and stammers and stutters in doing so. The mind of the mystic is awake but his emotion is so great that it interferes with his thinking. What is going on in him is real enough but it is taking place by a

process over which he has so little control that what issues from it is more like the eruption of a volcano than the sudden appearance of a growing plant above the soil. He thinks in pictures as the inspired prophet does, but his pictures and symbols have no fixed or universally admitted value and may mean whatever you can read into them. He piles up metaphors, similes, parables and allegories in a bewildering confusion. The natural layers or levels of the mind such as sensation, perception, memory and imagination which the normal man can pretty generally distinguish from one another so that he does not confuse, for example, a percept with an image, seem to be jumbled together in the mind of the mystic by a sort of subterranean upheaval, so that he mistakes an image for a percept and ascribes to his merely subjective visions an objective reality which they cannot have for anybody else. He seems to lack mental unity and the power of self-criticism so that, while his mind is often immensely and passionately active, as for example, in the case of Eckhart and Boehme, he is incapable of clear and steady thought and expresses himself so incoherently, with such leaps and jumps and gaps in his logic, that a rational mind wearies in its effort to follow and understand.

This lack of logic may be due to either of two things or to both. Emotion may be so great that thought is impossible, as is the case with us all when we are very angry or very joyful or very anxious or very excited over anything. This no doubt explains the incoherence of those numerous mystics who are intellectually and volitionally feeble, but it does not explain the incoherence of the greater mystics. To explain that we must invoke another principle.

The incoherence of the greater mystic is due fundamentally to the fact that he tries to force the mind to transcend itself and function outside the structure which evolution thus far has given it. He is not content to see and contemplate and shape ideals and act on faith: he wants to pierce the veil that hides from man the unseen world, to penetrate to the very heart of reality and see God face to face. This is not only his demand but his claim. He believes that he possesses a supernatural divine faculty for that very purpose. Plotinus affirmed that through intuition, the organ of illumination, the soul was liberated from the finite consciousness and gained absolute knowledge of the infinite. Eckhart held that the apex of the mind, the *Fünklein*, the uncreated spark was God himself, acting like a human faculty in the soul. Boehme and Swedenborg believed that a special revelation had laid bare the hidden processes of nature, the mystery of the divine dispensations and the secrets of the other world. Schelling interpreted nature by the unwritten inward revelation of Intellectual Intuition. The more orthodox mystics of the church had no difficulty in believing that they were in constant contact with the Divine and were the recipients of His favors and His commands. Direct acquaintance with God is the claim made by all the great mystics.

Plainly, this direct acquaintance with God is not possible on any sense level of life. "No eye hath seen God at any time." No telescope can find Him among the great bodies and no microscope among the small bodies of the world. No man by searching, that is, scientific thinking, can find out God. No satisfying vision of Him can be gained by looking for Him in the march of history or in the great personalities of

the race. That way, says the mystic, lies perpetual disappointment. God is not to be found in the world at all but beyond it. But how can we reach the Beyond? Only by reaching first the Beyond that is within. We must retire into the inner depths of the soul. To that end we must renounce and negate the world. We must rid the mind of the finite, the individual and the phenomenal, for, however important they may be for practical purposes, they are after all only appearance and illusion. And when we have succeeded in emptying the mind of all merely human and temporal interests, we must concentrate, with an intense and prolonged fixation, on some entirely spiritual reality.

But it is no easy matter for the mind to escape from its own contents or from the control of its own inherited structure over its activities. The body cannot get outside of its own skin and common sense suggests that it is equally impossible for the mind to get outside of its own massive experience of sensation, thought and moral striving. That the mystic does not find it easy to get outside this ordinary mind is obvious from the often violent efforts he has to make in order to do so. He may be content with the practice of solitude and silence, sitting still, holding the breath, excluding the distractions of the senses, prayer and meditation, waiting, waiting in the hope that the Scriptural promise will be fulfilled: "Be still and know that I am God." But if this quiet method brings inadequate results he will resort to asceticism and the mortification of the flesh. Some of the most famous mystics say that, to reach the goal, sense and imagination must be left behind, the pleasures of the body abandoned, and desire completely extirpated. If natural desire fails to yield its normal place in the mind in spite of the

mystic's refusal to give it the ordinary satisfactions, more heroic methods are adopted. The terrible and often revolting austerities which Suso and other mystics have practiced on themselves such as fasting, the wearing of hair cloth, the use of the scourge, prolonged and weakening vigils, etc., have been motivated by the hope that, through the weakening of the bodily life, the soul would be liberated and in the ecstatic trance attain that vision of God and that union with God which have been their passionate desire.

When this God beyond the world is found, as mystics think they do find Him, how is He described by them? The non-mystical religious person is invariably deeply disappointed by the answer. God is the Divine Abyss or the Divine Darkness or the Absolute Nothing or the Contentless One or a Formless Infinite or a God beyond all predicates such as rationality or morality or the Unutterable or the Ineffable or the Illimitable. But what is the value, intellectual, moral or spiritual, of such merely negative phrases or terms? They simply show that the negative path or the self-emptying process leads to a blank trance wherein reality slips from the mind's grasp altogether. The mind of man, occupying as it does a definite place in the evolutionary process and having a fairly definite structure of its own because of its place in that process, cannot escape from its own finitude and see God face to face by repeating over and over to itself such sounding phrases as the Divine Abyss or the Absolute Nothing or the Ineffable One. In attempting to transcend himself and the world the mystic only lands in the abyss. The Absolute Nothing which he thinks he finds in the trance is only the deification of the almost unconscious state which he induces in his own mind by auto-hypnosis. He as-

pires to soar beyond imagination, reason and prophetic inspiration; but in reality he falls below them into a sort of organic emotionalism in which there is a maximum of intense feeling and a minimum of intellectual content, a state he himself often describes in terms suggested by the sex-experience. He obliterates all distinctions in his frenzied effort to reach the One and when he reaches the One, he finds that it is only an empty, contentless Infinite, the thinnest shadow of an abstraction. He aims at crowning and perfecting human nature by an experience which lifts it above all earthly limits, but what he really achieves is the reduction of human nature from a highly organized psychic structure to a shapeless mass of psychic protoplasm. He desires to speak with a penetration and a clarity that cannot be reached on what he calls the lower rational level of the mind, but his actual speech is full of an incoherence and an unintelligibility of which the rational mind could hardly be guilty. We are obliged, then, to agree with Professor Morgan that the mystic's profundity is "a sham profundity." He thinks his gift is a superhuman one, but it is really only a romantic and on occasion a pathological exaggeration of man's natural interest in the abstractions of thought. There is a legitimate place in our thought-world for such ideas as the One, the Absolute, the Divine, the Transcendent but their meaning must be found within the realm of our reflective experience and not beyond it.

But, though the passionate desire of the mystic to pierce the veil that hides from man the unseen world is doomed to perpetual disappointment, it does not follow that a less romantic effort must go unrewarded. While it is vain to try to force the mind to transcend

itself, it may be possible to achieve within the actual limits of the mind a richer experience than the average person enjoys. No one ever realizes every possibility of his nature, but few actually reap more than a small fraction of their possible spiritual harvest. And in view of this latter fact we must ask if the mystics can offer us from their own experience any hints as to how life can be made to yield us greater satisfaction than we actually attain.

Here it is possible to strike a more optimistic note. While many mystics have sought to pierce the veil or soar beyond the bounds of their natural being, many more have been motivated simply by the desire for an immediacy of experience that would give them the sense of life and reality in periods when religion was formal and dead or even corrupt because of priestcraft or institutionalism or the general secularism of the times. That, surely, has been throughout the motive of the beautiful mysticism of the Friends both in England and America. The mysticism of Tauler and Thomas à Kempis and the German mysticism that influenced Luther was essentially if not entirely of this type. The mysticism of William Law and Henry Vaughan belongs here too. For all these, religion was an inward possession, a vital rhythm of moods, attitudes, ideas, hopes and affirmations that kept them constantly alive to the larger issues of life.

Such religion might be compared to love. The one experience through which most people enter into the realm of romance, if they ever enter into it at all, is the experience of love. The family which love founds is a social institution, a creation of custom and law, and therefore may become a very unromantic thing; but the love which attaches a man and woman to one an-

other and to their children, is by all odds the most vital and vitalizing experience which life brings to the majority of people. It is vital because it is distinctly their own. They do not owe it to tradition or law. It springs directly out of their biological and psychological needs. Whereas their politics or their opinions on art, music and literature, or their ecclesiastical affiliations, or the style of their clothes and automobile are determined for them by their group, their love, when it is genuinely romantic, is their own, an inner fountain of perpetual joy, an abiding comfort in the hours of sickness, sorrow or disappointment.

Now, the mystics of whom I am speaking desire to experience religion as genuinely romantic people experience love. They want such a relation of their minds to the objects of religious interests—God, Jesus, the virgin Mary, the saints, the Bible, etc., as will be self-authenticating, as love is, through the subjective thrill it evokes in them. They cannot abide the institutionalism, formalism and literalism that the elaborate organization of a spiritual movement almost always brings. They have little interest in the crystallization of their inner attitudes, aspirations and faiths into creeds and dogmas. They shrink from the cold, critical rationalistic treatment of the objects of religion such as is common in our time. They do not desire to analyze these objects from the outside but to live into them, to possess them inwardly, to be able to say as St. Paul said: "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me."

This kind of mysticism, obviously, lies open to serious abuses. As romantic love easily slops over into slushy, sensuous sentimentalism, so the mysticism that demands the authenticating thrill of personal im-

mediacy may degenerate into a sort of spiritual voluptuousness. It may become like the child's all-day sucker which yields him much sweet satisfaction but very little nourishment. And yet, real as this danger is, it cannot be said too emphatically that religion and morals are comparatively powerless until they enter into our inner life of feeling and vital interest as well as into our thought. After all, our thought is the more public part of our mind. It need not be vitally ours at all. Even so important an idea as that of evolution is taken up by many people into their body of thoughts and beliefs without any genuine imaginative realization of just what the genetic relationship of all living things to each other means. Our modern system of education and our magazine publications have filled the public mind with a mass of thoughts which seldom get deeper down than the level of discussion. Talking and writing are incessant and universal but for the most part they are carried on by a part of the mind which lies above the region of motives and action. The greatest weakness in our whole modern liberal movement in politics, religion and morals is that we are content, for the most part, to get our ideas into people's heads when the great need is to transform that part of their natures from which their conduct springs.

Now, it may well be that the objects of religion on which the mystics of the past fixed their rapt attention and which they desired to possess inwardly cannot fill our minds to-day as completely or just in the same way as they filled theirs. But, I submit, whatever our supreme objects may be in religion or morals, it is never enough merely to hold them in our thought and be ready to profess and defend them with our speech.

Only the mystic's attitude to them can ever make them vital. We must live into them, we must possess them inwardly, we must metabolize them, as it were, so that they become a part of our psychic structure and enlist the aid of our emotional and volitional nature with an almost instinctive readiness and force. Movements of mere thought are powerless against a widespread, organized and determined fanaticism. Only when thought sinks down deep enough to become character and ideal can it muster sufficient strength to fight and if need be die for a cause. Our educated people to-day are for the most part over-intellectualized in the sense that their knowledge is not sufficiently converted into conviction and that they are content to enjoy books passively when they ought to be actively furthering the cause of righteousness, peace and good-will in the world. Such knowledge does not possess men but is possessed by them. It has its public uses, no doubt, and is of considerable decorative value, but it does not enter into the deeps of the mind where personality is made and powerful action is generated. Therefore it is not the greatest asset either of an individual or of a nation. It is not the source of what the Great War taught us to call "morale." It enriches life, no doubt, and we would shudder at the thought of losing it through the overthrow of civilization by the barbarians in our midst, but it does not become a powerful motive to conduct because it has no tap-root running down deep into our subconscious mind.

Especially is this true of the kind of knowledge that is often furthered and stressed in our theological schools. Men may become more interested in the archæology of the Bible than in the religious and ethical principles which brought the Bible into being.

They may spend a lifetime in trying to trace all the parts of Isaiah to their various sources or in placing the prophets in their proper political and social setting or in distributing the Psalms among the various periods into which the history of Israel is now divided and become so absorbed in this work of scholarship that they cease to be excited and stirred by the religious faith and moral passion which made the prophets and psalmists what they were. Or they may become so interested in the Synoptic problem or the problem of the life of Jesus in general that the hero whose life they study becomes for them far more an intellectual puzzle than an inspiration to life and conduct. Or they may devote themselves with so much ardor and scientific methodology to the study of religions in general that they have no really active religious sentiment of their own at all. Or they may become so deeply involved in the story of the past of Christianity that they have no vital concern for its present or its future. All these kinds of knowledge in the religious realm have their value in making clear to us how the religious sentiment has actually worked in human life; but after all, unless they enrich the religious sentiment in the student himself, they do not go deep enough into his mind to give him the kind of power over men which the Bible heroes have had.

It is obvious, then, that we might learn much from those mystics who aspired, within the limits of the mind, to identify themselves so completely with the objects of religion and morals that these would become an inward possession and a powerful support to the volitional nature. Just that kind of mysticism is the great need of liberalism to-day. It has an increasing body of sound psychological and social knowledge; it can lay its

finger with considerable certainty upon the weak spots of our modern life; it is getting to know more and more clearly how it would like to refashion the inner and outer life of man; it is perfectly well aware that society can be transformed only with the hearty coöperation of multitudes of people and that their coöperation must spring from a refreshed and rejuvenated life within their own minds. But how to bring about that rejuvenation? How to stir the deeper nature of people who are tempted at every turn to be content with the superficial life of pleasure and gain? That is the unanswered question. Certainly it cannot be done unless the leaders themselves can achieve something of the passionate conviction which the mystic felt. They must live into their ideals as Abraham Lincoln did and as Jane Addams is doing. These two great American personalities are perhaps not generally classed among the mystics and they probably do not fit into any of the ordinary classifications used by writers on mysticism. But if we mean by mysticism the inward possession of great ideals and the transformation of character and purpose by the influence of those ideals, then Abraham Lincoln and Jane Addams must be included among the great ethical mystics of the world. The analytic classroom study of the Sacred Scriptures and of ethical ideals can never generate the religious faith and the moral passion that alone can give men and women the psychic power to awaken the better nature of humanity. We must supplement the type of study which supplies mere knowledge about the phenomena of religion and morals with something that builds up in human beings such concrete enthusiasms as Abraham Lincoln and Jane Addams well illustrate in the moral realm and to that end a greater familiarity

with the methods by which the milder mystics, to use a phrase of Professor Pratt's, generate and sustain their spiritual enthusiasms, might be of service. Our greatest need among educated circles is not for more knowledge but for more life, more kindling power, more moral drive, more confidence in moral ideals and more mystic fervor in presenting them to others.

There is one other type of mysticism which has sustained the inner life of many lofty personalities in days gone by, on which I must say a word before turning to another topic. I refer here to what we may call nature-mysticism. The dwellers in great cities are for the most part cut off from this source of spiritual enjoyment and enrichment, although foreign travel and the universal use of the automobile may help a little to restore the old balance of life. Whatever more man may be, at least he may be called a child of nature. His body and his mind have been shaped in response to the light and the atmosphere and the earth's diurnal and annual movements, and the solid, liquid and gaseous forms of matter and the colors, sounds and contours of terrestrial things. For hundreds of thousands of years he lived so close to nature that every one of her major doings awakened thrilling emotions of joy or fear in his breast. His old mother treated him now roughly, now gently, was now bountiful and again stingy but always he was aware of her presence and his imagination was filled with her glory and her power. To-day, however, our imaginations do not lie thus open to her influence. The petty, mechanical creations of man dominate us in great cities more and more and dull our souls so that we can hardly respond to the great splendors of nature when we do see them or to the poetry of the Bible or of our own literature in

which those splendors are celebrated. More than a hundred years ago when cities were fewer and smaller than they are now and life was less mechanized than it is to-day, Wordsworth bore testimony to his sense of man's tragic loss of imaginative contact with nature in the famous sonnet which ends with the passionate outburst:

Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

But the Pagan feeling for nature whose passing Wordsworth here regrets never reached the mystic intensity which Wordsworth's own feeling often attained. The polytheism of Greece which ascribed a divinity to each power of nature and thus departmentalized, as it were, man's emotional responses to nature, did not lend itself to the unifying and intensifying of human feeling as monotheism did. But with the coming of monotheism and the humanizing by Christianity of the conception of the one God, the mind became capable of a nature-mysticism which far surpasses in power anything known to the ancient world. Few, perhaps, have felt it as deeply as Wordsworth; certainly no one has equaled him in the expression of it, but many minds have shared his experience in some degree and respond with deep gratitude to his utterance of it. His poem called "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey" has become for many "a joy forever" because it recalls to them experiences which they have had in earlier years and which are no

longer easily possible but which they earnestly desire never to forget. But a less-known passage in "The Excursion," seems to me to express even more completely the elevation which the mind experiences when it is in vital imaginative contact with nature, and every part of it is so organically necessary to every other part that I shall quote it in full :

Such was the Boy—but for the growing youth
 What soul was his, when, from the naked top
 Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
 Rise up and bathe the world in light! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
 Beneath him;—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could be read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
 The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him; they swallowed up
 His animal being; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!

It would be hard to say to what extent human minds are still capable of this exaltation. The mechanizing of our imagination, our dislike of solitude, our hatred of concentration all tend to blight our ancient desire for such experiences. But our acquired disabilities are not supposed to be inherited by our children. The

way of return to a genuine nature-mysticism still lies open. Our science and our industry may not always continue to mechanize our minds. They may be so completely mastered by us and enslaved to our uses that we will feel free again to live in our imagination and our emotions. If and when that time comes, it will be again discovered that the inward possession of the beauty and grandeur of the natural world is an immense enrichment of our inner life and a gateway to other and still higher experiences.

CHAPTER VI

CONVERSION AS A STAGE IN SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

Man has always been impressed by the unusual. Whatever recurs again and again in his experience fails to arouse his wonder, no matter how significant it may be in itself. What could be more stupendous than the awakening of life on the earth in the springtime? But though man has always realized its significance and welcomed the first signs of it with joy in his heart and songs on his lips, it has not excited his curiosity as an earthquake or a tornado or a tidal wave or an eclipse of the sun has. When once a process has occurred often enough to be regarded as a part of the general nature of things, it ceases to excite any particular attention. It is called a datum and taken for granted.

It is the same with mental events. Nothing could be more wonderful than the simplest sensation, let us say, of color, or the most familiar thought-process or the common experience of remorse or self-sacrifice. How different rates of vibrations of the ether, impinging on the eye and sending a stimulus through the optic nerve to certain centers in the brain, become sensations of red, orange, yellow, green and blue; how a creature made of the common matter and energy of the world can make that matter and energy the subject of its study, can measure the speed of light and analyze the substance of the sun and the stars, can tell chapter by

chapter the story of how the evolution of life took place on the earth, can subject its own inner life to analysis and write books on the structure of its own mind; how a human mother can identify herself so completely with her child that she is willing to lay down her life for it and thus defeat every other instinct of her being—all these are mysteries which no science or philosophy has ever fathomed. But we are so accustomed to these experiences, they are so obviously the very warp and woof of life that we take them for granted and have to be educated into any perception of their marvelousness.

Among religious experiences probably none has inspired more wonder or been more generally revered and valued than that called conversion. In the more emotional communions it has been regarded as the distinguishing mark of a high spirituality. Those who have never experienced its illumination, rapture and ecstasy and the sudden change of heart which accompanies it have been looked down upon as mere formalists or persons with a very meager spiritual endowment. It has been thought that as there are differences of talent among the people generally for music or painting or poetry or mathematics or administration or education or athletics, so people have different capacities for religion and those who have experienced conversion have been regarded as the genuines in this realm. What Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel have been in philosophy, what Euclid, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Faraday, Darwin and Einstein have been in science, what Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe have been in poetry, that the greatest heroes of the conversion-experience have been in religion.

There are two reasons at least why this view is worthy of our serious consideration. It is entirely likely that all men are not equally endowed with capacity for religious experience. Most of us can profit a little from the philosophy, science, poetry and art created by others without being able to create them for ourselves, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the religious differences between people are rooted also in differences of capacity. Whether the religious experience called conversion is invariably a token of high religious capacity or not we shall see later on, but that there are differences in general capacity for religious experience cannot be denied. Moreover it has to be admitted that many of the great movements of history which lifted civilizations from a low primitive state of morals and social life to a higher plane have been set going by converted men. Doubtless these men could have done little for their age if the age had not been more or less ripe for them, that is, if many people had not longed for the spiritual guarantees which the experience of conversion gave to the converted. Nevertheless the starting-point of the whole movement was the vivid transforming experience of conversion in the innovating individual. The list of such converted men includes some of the greatest names in human history—the Buddha, St. Paul, Augustine, Mohammed, St. Francis, Luther, George Fox, John Wesley, William Booth, Ramakrishna, Devendranath Tagore and many others of smaller spiritual stature. No one familiar with the evangelical movement within the Protestant church during the last two centuries could doubt that for thousands of its greatest and most devoted leaders the conversion-experience was the most significant moment of their lives, a creative synthesis

of the powers of their personality without which they could not have attained the high level of devotion or the fullness of life which they did attain.

In considering the subject of conversion Christian people must be on their guard against three common misunderstandings. They must not think, for example, that the conversion-experience is exclusively Christian. As a matter of fact the experience has been described in very similar terms by men and women of various religions. Human nature everywhere has common elements and is confronted by similar situations, within and without, and conversion, while not universal in any religious community, is experienced by a few in every one of them. The evangelical Christian sects may have worked more systematically than most other religious bodies to produce the experience in individuals but the Moslem Sufis have not been far behind them. Whenever an intense inner conflict has arisen in the personality of anyone, conversion has been one means of unification, no matter what religion the individual had inherited. Conversion is a mental experience, a mode of mental evolution, a movement within the mind from a state of dissociation toward a state of integration, and it is likely to appear with considerable frequency wherever historical circumstances have produced a state of great spiritual tension among the people.

Moreover, Christian people must not overvalue conversion by supposing that it furnishes insight of an intellectual kind. If it did, the slow tedious methods of science might be abandoned. The conversion-experience in itself sheds no light on astronomy or physics or any of the natural sciences; it has never helped a convert to formulate any law of matter or of life or of mind; it does not give to the converted man any

intellectual power that he did not have before he was converted. Its work is done rather on a deeper level of the mind. It transforms perplexity or doubt or indifference concerning the religious values of the community into burning conviction; it integrates personalities hitherto dissociated by concentrating their sentiments on some worthy object or ideal and by this stirring of the whole mind causes the converted person to use his natural intellectual powers with more passion and purpose than he had ever been capable of before. The greatness of such converts as St. Paul and St. Augustine is no exception to the rule. Their conversion only supplied them with a passionate and unified purpose into which they could throw all the intellectual powers with which heredity had endowed them.

Finally, people are never converted to beliefs or ideals or ways of living of which they have never heard before. The notion of miracle has hovered so constantly around the Christian conception of conversion that it is necessary to recall the fact that there is the closest continuity between the beliefs of converted people after their conversion and the particular antecedent beliefs in which they were reared. Conversion is not a miraculous emancipation of the individual from the ideas and obligations of social heredity, and the swift filling of the mind with a body of hitherto unknown ideas and sentiments; it is rather the individual's glad acceptance of those ideas and obligations as part of his own equipment for life and duty. Not conversion but doubt, inquiry, reflection and conscious intellectual struggle is the way to a new system of ideas or a new philosophy of life.

Our objective in this chapter is a description and

evaluation of the conversion-experience, but our best method of approach to that objective is an indirect one. We must try to make our problem stand out clearly by isolating it as far as possible from other problems.

It has been a great source of bewilderment to strong believers in the necessity of conversion to discover that the values achieved by conversion have been attained quite as definitely without a conversion-experience at all. There have always been in the Christian world and presumably in the Mohammedan and Buddhist worlds as well, millions of people who have enjoyed and practiced their religion with perfect sincerity but who have never known any dramatic moment when religion seemed to become their inward possession for the first time. They have gained the same level of spiritual peace, hope and enthusiasm which the converted people have gained but they cannot talk at large about the road over which they have traveled to reach that level. Edward Everett Hale in his answer to a questionnaire plainly indicated that he belonged to that group and no one familiar with religious people can doubt that it is a very large group. They may experience a slight intensification of religious emotion now and then in their adolescent years but on the whole their religious experience is so gradual a process that they are quite unable to keep any record of it. They simply discover in later adult life that the structure of their personality is shaped by certain ideas, emotions, aspirations and ideals which they share with their religious community. Without any conscious conversion-experience they have attained what the converted people seem to attain only by means of a dramatic moment of illumination, rapture and ecstasy.

They possess in later life, as a rule, just as well-unified a self as the converted; they are just as faithful to their religious institutions and ideals as the converted are; they may be even better citizens than the converted because they have never been isolated from their neighbors by any specially intense experience which their neighbors could not share. By a long slow process of spiritual development without any climacteric moments in it, they have achieved a psychic equilibrium; they have brought their spiritual impulses to fruition in permanent mental structure and in character; they have, without knowing how, been incorporated into the higher life of their group.

Now what does this fact mean? Does it not indicate that the explanation of conversion must be sought, not in the realm of the supernatural, but in the mental differences which distinguish one type of persons from another? It achieves no end which is not achieved about equally well without it, that is, it simply unifies personality and brings spiritual impulses to fruition. It must be due, therefore, to some obstacle or conflict within the individual himself which prevents or arrests the normal development of his spiritual nature and which can only be overcome or resolved by a more or less violent or cataclysmic breaking-through of the pent-up forces of his spirit. Psychologically considered, a dramatic conversion, whether adolescent or adult, is the resolution of a conflict, conscious or unconscious, within the mind of the experient, by his identification of himself with some object commanding enough to stimulate his better nature and enlist his enthusiastic service and at the same time austere enough to quell the mutiny of the lower nature which was the cause of the conflict.

It will help us to clarify our description of the conversion-experience later on, if we distinguish between conversions that are spontaneous and conversions that are deliberately sought after or are largely imitative. We saw in our last chapter that there is a clear distinction between spontaneous and imitative mysticism. The same distinction is to be observed here. Of course there must be some capacity for the conversion-experience even in those with whom it is largely artificial. Few adolescents entirely escape a struggle, resembling an inner conflict, with the budding sex-impulse and practiced evangelists can easily enlarge that special conflict into a general sense of sinfulness and guilt. But with a large proportion, probably with the majority of converted people, the experience is induced by artificial means. Pratt has shown, I think with complete success, that a preconceived idea of conversion determined the much-discussed conversions of Bunyan and Brainard. Their troubles were due in part at least to their forcing themselves to conform to a false model—false in that it insisted on an exaggerated sense of sin, on a psychologically unsound idea of passivity and on an undue regard for violent feeling. Hundreds of thousands of people since Bunyan have conformed to the same false model. At the suggestion of the conventional evangelist they have striven to feel themselves great sinners, to yield themselves passively to the divine influence and to experience a powerful emotional upheaval and a violent reaction from their past. Sometimes a hidden conflict is resolved by the conversion and the convert actually experiences the violent feelings he expresses; but, in the majority of cases, what has actually happened is something very different psychologically from the experience as described. It

is more like a slight hypnosis than like the actual conversion-experience of a Paul or an Augustine or a Luther or a Tagore. It is determined not by a spontaneous activity within the mind itself but by the conventional suggestions of a preacher applying an accepted theology. The passivity-element in the conventional model is due to Luther's doctrine of the utter helplessness of the sinner and his complete dependence on divine grace; the exaggerated emphasis on sin is a part of our Protestant inheritance from Calvin, and the insistence on violent feeling is a survival from the teaching of Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards. As the mystics who were incapable of a first-hand spontaneous mystical experience devised what they called "The Mystic Way," that is, a systematic method by which the meagerly-equipped individual might induce upon himself the desired experience, so the orthodox theologian assisted by the evangelist created a conventional model for the conversion-experience and an accompanying theology called "the plan of salvation," and then by preaching the plan of salvation tried to make every subject experience conversion in the conventional way. It would be a cruel travesty of the facts to say that nothing really happened in these experiences. Often people were helped to bring their spiritual nature to the birth, but nothing beyond systematic suggestion is needed to explain the difference between them and those other persons, already discussed, who achieved the same results without any conversion-experience. We must turn elsewhere for instances of real conversion, of that mighty emotional upheaval which has changed the course of individual lives and, now and then, the course of human history.

The profound reverence which the religious mind

has always shown for the conversion-experience is based on the stupendous influence of a few converted men on human history. The vast influence of the Buddha on the life of Asia for twenty-five hundred years cannot be gainsaid and Buddha was converted under the famous Bo tree. Without Paul, Christianity might have been lost to the world with the dying out of the little Jewish-Christian sects of the first century, and Paul's mighty career as a missionary and a preacher was ushered in by a conversion-experience which has been a perfect bulwark of supernaturalism for eighteen hundred years. Few Christians are as yet prepared to do justice to Mohammed as a religious genius, but they cannot read out of history the story of the powerful influence he has exerted over Asia and Africa for twelve hundred years or deny that that influence flowed from a conversion-experience as spontaneous and genuine as that of Buddha or of Paul. Such men as Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, Loyola and Wesley no doubt fall far below the three already named in sheer bulk of personality and in the depth and range of their influence on the souls of men; but they have all been great creative spirits in the Christian world, the transformers of men's inner lives, the makers of religious institutions, the shapers of human history, and every one of them traced his career to a conversion-experience which he could recall as definitely as any great upheaval in the objective world. It is such conversions as these that give a keen edge to the problem of the psychological interpretation of the conversion-experience, and if a theory fails to throw light on these it must be regarded as a flat failure. To treat such experiences as insignificant because they did not add to our scientific or historical knowledge is simply to betray

our incapacity to deal with the imaginative, emotional and volitional elements in human nature when these display themselves on a grand scale.

In turning to those cases in which the conversion-experience assumes its most dramatic form, it is essential that we approach them from the right angle. Conversion is a fact of the mental order; it occurs in a mind in which a thousand other things are occurring; it is a highly specialized event in the evolution of a personality. Hence its context, its matrix, its milieu is the total mind of the individual in whom it occurs. Its explanation must be sought, therefore, by relating it so far as possible to the total mind of the individual in his place and time. In the past theology leaped at once from the mysterious isolated mental fact to a supernatural cause; to-day we explain by relating the individual event to larger wholes, and in the case of conversion the immediate larger whole is the total mind of the individual in a definite stage of its evolution and in a definite social milieu.

All normal human bodies have the same general structure, organs and functions, but that does not prevent them from differing from one another in a thousand details. Likewise all minds have the same general structure of instinctive dispositions, temperament, mental processes, sentiments, habits, conceptual system and organized selfhood but that does not prevent them from differing from one another in ways too numerous to mention. The instincts may vary in strength and persistence; the temperament may be steadfast or fickle, despondent or hopeful, placid or violent; the sentiments may be of love or of hate and attached to quite different objects; the habits may be of many kinds physical and mental; the conceptual system varies with

the practical and intellectual interests. Nature uses the same old forms but within these forms she manages to achieve very great differences—the active and the passive, the introvert and the extrovert, the self-assertive and the self-effacing, the tough-minded and the tender-minded, the melancholy and sky-blue natures, the intuitive and the reflective, etc.

Now the human type which prevails among the subjects of a dramatic conversion-experience has been aptly called by Höffding *the discordant type*. Inner division is the prevailing condition. They cannot get their inner nature satisfied or unified and constantly suffer from a state of rebellion in their own deeper mind. What drives them to seek outside of themselves some unifying agency is the discord in their own breasts.

They are [as Höffding says] conscious of such violent inner opposition that only a force different from any of those at work in them can help them to surmount the obstacles that confront them. Tortured by the opposition offered within their own breasts to their ideal, the effect of which is heightened by the close proximity of the ideal, they turn to juristic analogies; they feel like prisoners in the presence of a judge.

The source of distress may be of many kinds. It may be a passionate but unsatisfied craving for insight into the meaning of life as with Tagore and Carlyle; or a deep dissatisfaction with one's own past experience of life as in the cases of Augustine and Tolstoi; or a deep discord between a vehement but merely tribal conscience and new perceptions of truth and life as illustrated by St. Paul; or a passionate longing to escape from the miseries of sin as with the converts of whom Harold

Begbie writes; or a sickening sense of disillusion and of the flatness and staleness of existence; or an unsatiated yearning for some permanent center of loyalty; or a longing for such intuitive certainty as will bring peace and rest to a mind tortured beyond endurance by perplexity and doubt; or a self-distrust which cannot face the dangers and risks of life without some assurance of cosmic sympathy and support; or a sorrowing heart, bruised, hurt and impoverished, and crying out for healing, comfort and companionship. The source of distress is of many kinds but it always involves an inner mental conflict, a slight splitting of consciousness, an isolation of one part of the mind by alarming natural events or superstitions, dreads and portents.

How the swift change from this state of conflict, division and deep dissatisfaction with self to a state of harmony, exaltation and rapture actually takes place we do not know. Like all cases of creative synthesis, whether among chemical elements or the elements of personality, we can see the results but cannot analyze the process. Often at the very height of the struggle some external event which has no connection with the inner process gives the mind the shake or push it needs to bring about the reaction desired. As in the field of chemical combinations what is called a catalyzer changes the velocity of a reaction without changing its products and without taking part in the reaction itself, so these accidental external events act as catalyzers in the psychological changes of the converted. Paul is overpowered by the heat of the noonday; Augustine is shaken by the first verse that catches his eye as he opens the Bible; John Wesley realizes the change he has long desired as he listens to a Moravian preacher

tell the story of his own conversion; Debendranath Tagore's attention is caught by a page of a Sanskrit book as it flutters past him. But these seemingly significant events are not real components of the inner process. They only supply the little touch of objectivity which is often needed, not only in religion but in practical life as well, to give the will the final push toward surrender or action as the case may be. With the push once given, the results are often very sudden and very striking. Frequently those results are only transformations of the feelings. From a state of depression the convert leaps to a state of speechless ecstasy and rapture. But often the change is much more profound. There is a sense of illumination, of truth breaking in on the mind like a flood of light. Now and then the convert gains a striking victory over evil habits of long standing. Although the native strength of the mental faculties is not increased, there is a quickening of the intellectual activity, because of the transformation and vitalizing of the convert's life-purpose. In all the more important cases there is a profound transformation of character through the domination of a new sentiment, a transvaluation of all values, an enlargement of the range and authority of the central will, a directing of the energies of life into entirely new channels. Of course results as important as these are not achieved in all cases of sudden and striking conversion but in such powerful and gifted personalities as St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, John Wesley, General Booth, Tagore and many, many others, the reorganization of the affective and volitional elements of the mind is very complete indeed and the mind thus reorganized is energized for new ends. The inner conflict of the personality is

brought to an end once and forever by the complete identification of the remade self with a mission or a cause that seems to him to gather up into itself all that gives supreme value to human life.

The understanding of a striking conversion of a powerful personality, then, so far as such a unique creative mental event can be understood, is to be attempted along three lines: first, a psychological study of the general mental make-up of the convert in question; second, an historical study of his cultural background and the influences that have been deposited, with or without his consciousness, in the depths of his mind; and, third, a survey of the career upon which the convert is launched by his conversion. As an illustration of this sort of inquiry let us turn to the modern interpretation of the conversion of St. Paul, the most influential conversion known to the Christian world.

An examination of the references to this conversion in the New Testament soon shows us that our data are not very reliable. Paul has not described the event with any fullness in his own letters but only alluded to it here and there. There are three accounts of it in the Acts of the Apostles and a central kernel is common to all three, but the contradictions in them are so obvious that we cannot trust anything that goes beyond the common matter. Taking Paul's own allusions to it as indicating what he thought of it, it is plain that he regarded it as "vision," not a seeing with the eyes of the body but with the eyes of the mind. What circumstance was the immediate occasion of it, whether the weariness brought on by his journey or the heat of the noonday, must remain uncertain; but something connected with his journey to Damascus and his persecution of the Christians produced a decided

shock in his consciousness and resulted in his vision of Jesus, a profound reorganization of his character and a complete reversal of the program of his life.

Now, the psychological method of dealing with such an event leads us to ask, first of all, if Paul's temperament was such as to expose him to sudden shocks and mystic hallucinations. We need not seek far for an answer as Paul himself gives it in II Cor. xii. 1-4. He speaks there of "visions and revelations" as though there had been many of them, but he mentions one in particular in which "he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter." He says in I Cor. xiv. 18, that he is an adept at "speaking with tongues." He believes that he receives intimations of a wonderful kind from "the spirit."¹ In these various references we see an unmistakable picture of an ecstatic such as we find in all religions. As Wrede says: "Paul stands revealed as the brother of all those illuminati and visionary enthusiasts who were so highly esteemed during the Reformation and even to-day emerge among the sects." Plainly a man with his temperament was predisposed to just such an experience as his conversion seems to have been.

In turning to our second inquiry, a study of the cultural influences that may have affected his subconscious mind, we can take advantage of the fresh light recently thrown on Paul's milieu by Guignebert in his *Christianity, Past and Present*.² It has been generally supposed that Paul, an orthodox Jew and Pharisee, was suddenly converted to a faith the very opposite of anything he had known before and that his interpretation of that

¹ I Cor. ii. 10.

² Macmillan, 1927, pp. 91-96.

new faith was a unique contribution for which he had received no help from anyone. But Guignebert gives strong reasons for believing that the groundwork of Paulinism was really communicated to Paul in a Hellenistic Christian community—probably Antioch—before his conversion took place; that he was brought up, not in the Judaism of Palestine, but in the more or less syncretistic Judaism of the Diaspora; that faith in salvation through a God who dies and rises again had met him at every turn and obtained, without his suspecting it, a foothold in his mind; that, through the influence of this Savior-God concept, his own Messianic hope was already tending to be universalized; that his Pharisaic experience of the Law which leaves him in anguish of soul through sin, that threatens on all sides and makes escape hopeless, was exactly the state of mind that would lead him to look for a Savior or Divine Mediator; and that his conversion was brought about by a sudden meeting in his consciousness between ideas which are profound yet long familiar and the Christian rendering of them presented by Hellenists in a form digestible by a Jew brought up on Greek soil. The synthesis when it comes is effected, in unusual circumstances, by a stroke of inspiration like the vision of St. Francis on the way to Spoleto or the apparition of the Virgin to Ignatius Loyola. If this account, which I have taken in condensed form from Guignebert, should turn out to be the real story of Paul's spiritual environment prior to his conversion, then the conversion itself becomes much easier to understand. It was an event prepared for by a fairly long period of spiritual distress and the fulfillment of a long-cherished desire for the coming of the Messiah.

Our third question concerns the career of the Apostle

after his conversion. The change wrought by the conversion is very real but only in the sense that the energy of his nature is turned in a new direction. There is the same tremendous intensity of concentration on religion as the one end of life both before and after his conversion. His conversion does not broaden out his mind so that he can include among his interests science and the nobler fruits of culture. He is completely indifferent to the economic side of life and is not concerned about its reorganization with a view to social justice. Even political life and civic independence mean little to him. So completely absorbed is he in religion that marriage seems in his eyes a lower estate than complete untrammelled devotion to God. It is acknowledged by all that he was an intense fanatic before his conversion; and if we hesitate to call him a fanatic after his conversion, it is not because we feel that his interests have broadened out, but because we approve the ends he was seeking to establish. As Guignebert says: "The vision on the road to Damascus has not changed Paul; it has merely impelled him to apply his former principles of thought and action in another direction."

Plainly this interpretation of Paul's conversion is very different from his own. He believed that it was due to a direct revelation from God or the risen Christ and would have repudiated the modern psychological attempt to seek its meaning in terms of something happening within the mind itself as a sort of sacrilege. That has been the attitude of theology up to fairly recent times. But it is being abandoned under the pressure of modern psychology. If a direct revelation from God is to be invoked in explanation of Paul's conversion it must be invoked also in explanation of

a hundred others, Mohammed's, Loyola's and Tagore's included, but when miracles are too often called to our aid, we begin to suspect them altogether. Only in comparatively recent times has man begun to learn something about the resources of his own mind. He has used those resources with more or less fullness but he has not understood them, just as the Greeks thought by means of concepts long before Socrates discovered the significance of concepts. But the vast range of our mental life is a good deal more obvious to us to-day. All the various kinds of modern psychology—structural, functional, psychoanalytic, behavioristic, Gestalt, social, abnormal, etc.—have been discovering perplexities and depths in the mind that few people realized before, and they only in an intuitive, haphazard way. And as a result of all this work it is becoming easy for us to believe that there is no reason to invoke the principle of revelation or psychological miracle to explain even the most significant conversion. No cautious and critical psychologist would say that he could explain such a conversion completely because he does not believe that he can explain any mind completely. But he does believe that the explanation of everything mental, however divine it may be, is to be sought among the resources, balances, reserves, activities and processes of the mind itself, rather than in any postulated influx from another world which conforms in no way to the natural processes of our mental life. The whole medical profession is as yet baffled by the mystery of cancer; neither its certain cause nor its complete cure is yet known, but medical men do not give up the problem and content themselves with attributing it to some demon. Likewise the psychologist does not pretend to know the complete causation of a psychical event such

as Paul's conversion; he only says that we must continue to seek it along psychological lines.

It must not be supposed, however, that a psychological explanation of conversion would rob it of its value as a religious experience. As James said, it is to be judged by its fruits and not by its roots, and undoubtedly on the whole the fruits of conversion have been vastly significant. Now and then it may be a disease symptom; the inner conflict is not cured but only brought to an end by the identification of the individual with some fantasy; but on the whole it is a movement toward restored health, toward integration and away from dissociation. If only "sky-blue natures" were born into the world, conversions might pass away, but there is no such prospect before us. Multitudes of people will always find our modern life too complex for them and in their efforts to adjust themselves to it will develop all sorts of inner conflicts. For such persons a religion which undertakes to resolve such conflicts will always have value. It may well be that in our modern life with its vast industrial, financial, administrative and scientific interests and activities our greatest need is for well-balanced men and women, for persons broad and cool rather than intense and eager, but the moral and spiritual life of man would suffer if such persons were the only ones prized among us. The moral life of man is not renewed by mere scientific research or well-oiled administrative machinery or philosophical reflection; it calls for a deeper stirring of our emotional and imaginative nature through the impact of our Carlyles and Ruskins and Mazzinis and Tolstois and Gandhis upon the moral sensibilities of youth; and in the future as in the past, the converted man, the prophet from the wilderness, the intense but slightly

narrow enthusiast who carries with him always the scars of inward battle, may be needed to keep up the *moral* fiber of the nations and to point out to multitudes, who have become unhappy through the shallowness and artificiality of their existence, the way that leads to "the peace that passeth all understanding."

CHAPTER VII

SALVATION AS THE ORGANIZATION OF CHARACTER

The topics discussed in the last three chapters—inspiration, mysticism and conversion—refer to experiences of a deeply subjective and interior nature. Theologies grow out of them when men undertake to interpret them into their meanings, but at first they are events in that part of the mind that lies below the level of reflection. On the other hand, the idea of salvation with which we are to deal in this chapter and which has played a great rôle in the history of religion belongs more clearly on the reflective level. The widely current evangelical phrase—the plan of salvation—suggests to those who use it not so much a spontaneous psychic event as a theory or a method consciously and deliberately wrought out by the mind, a sort of philosophy of history. The thousands of volumes written by Christian theologians on the *theory* of the atonement indicate that the idea of salvation is secondary rather than primary in religion, a way of thinking about a fact of the inner life rather than a description of that experimental fact itself.

Conceptions of salvation are many but they may be reduced to something like order by grouping them according to the evils from which man wishes to be saved and according to the means by which it is claimed that

salvation can be achieved. The evils from which salvation is sought may be the universality of human suffering such as obsessed the imagination of the Buddha in India in the sixth century B.C., or the inner conflicts of a disordered mind from which the individual seeks relief as among the Stoics, or mortality itself as with those who embraced the Greek and Oriental mysteries, or the fear of Hell and the judgment-day as among the Mohammedans and orthodox Christians, or national calamity as among the Hebrews, or the unreality and emptiness of life due to man's excessive clinging to the illusory sense of individuality as among the philosophical Hindus, or the feeling of limitation and sad self-estrangement which the soul experiences so long as it is chained to the body as with Plato, Plotinus and other mystics, or the concrete miseries of life resulting from sensual, vicious and selfish living as among the converts of the Salvation Army and the great revivals. The cry, What must I do to be saved? has often been an artificial one because the evils from which men desired to be saved were largely imaginary, that is, the sense of them did not spring out of actual experience but rather was the mind's response to tradition, suggestion and deliberate teaching. But in the India of the Buddha, in the Athens of Plato, in the Asia Minor of Paul, in the Rome of Plotinus, in the Germany of Luther, in the England of Wesley and in the slums of modern cities where the Salvation Army has worked, the evils and miseries of life were so many and so painful that the yearning for salvation was as natural and spontaneous as the craving for water in the desert. Man is so complex a being and desires happiness so intensely, social relations are often so crude, unjust and unhappy, nature is often so unkind, fate is

often so baffling that the longing for deliverance, for escape, for mastery over evil is as inevitable as hunger and love.

The means by which salvation is thought to be achieved likewise vary with the different religions. In Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Mohammedanism the stress was laid on the acceptance of a religion conceived to be the only true one and conformity to its sacred law. Sometimes conformity to the law involved essentially the performance of ceremonial acts, sometimes of moral acts and sometimes of both, but always there was a flavor of legality and formality about it. Those who did not embrace the one true religion could not be saved and those who did embrace it possessed it, not so much by any thrilling personal experience of it, but rather as one possesses a great family or communal tradition.

In the Greek and Oriental mysteries, the evil from which salvation was sought was mortality itself. Men desired to attain to the immortality of the Gods but for them the way to the goal lay through the mind itself. Salvation was not a matter of belief in a revelation already given or conformity to a law already imposed, but active emotional participation in mysterious experiences by means of which all the usual inhibitions of the mind were broken down and the individual, in a very ecstasy of enthusiastic abandon, identified himself with Divinity and thereby felt himself to be immortal. Unfortunately, however, this participation in the divine nature did not necessarily involve any genuine interest in the moral virtues or any sincere purification of the moral will but only a ceremonial purgation—something that man has always found

easier than a thorough cleansing of the heart and the moral impulses.

Men have also sought salvation by the way of works. To the evangelical Christians this way seems a blind alley. They have been taught to "lay their deadly doing down, Doing ends in death." Faith and works have been opposed in a dualism that is fatal to both. But the way of works as illustrated by the early Buddhists and the Stoics was not the way of works which Luther fought and to which the evangelicals have always been opposed. Protestants think of works in this connection as external acts performed at the behest of the church, a childish sort of effort to turn the heart of God toward us by doing the things He is supposed to like. The works of the early Buddhists and the Stoics, however, were not such simple external performances as these, but heroic efforts of the mind and will to root out of life those carnal desires which, they thought, are the source of all our suffering. Buddha created a method which, he believed, would destroy desire and he who followed faithfully the eight-fold path had a hero's task cut out for him. In primitive Buddhism at least where the method was sincerely practiced, salvation was strictly an achievement of the individual for himself and by himself without any help from a God such as other religions have always sought. It was salvation by man's own power. The work of the early Buddhist was an intense internal striving like the work of a creative artist; and whether we approve of his sheer *humanism* or not, we must distinguish sharply between the way of works as he practiced it and the way of works as inculcated by the Roman church prior to the Reformation. The same thing can

be said of Stoicism. For the Stoic ethics was the culminating discipline, virtue the only good, salvation a wisely ordered life, and everything else, including speculation about the nature of the Universe, was of subordinate significance. Man needs, as we shall contend later, a richer faith in the ultimate significance of life than the early Buddhists and the Stoics had, but their contribution to the doctrine of salvation must be taken up into any conception of the "saved" man that we may arrive at in time to come. Their thought is far more genuinely modern than that of many of our most vociferous and dogmatic contemporaries.

Others have sought salvation by means of transcendental knowledge. This is the way of the philosophical mystics. To be saved is to rise to the height of the soul's real being. On the lower sensuous levels of experience men cling to their so-called individuality; they insist on rights and property and social caste; they pride themselves on their exclusiveness. But such individuality is a mere illusion. It is only poverty of soul that makes men desire to cling to it. On the heights of its being the soul is of the same identical reality as Brahman, and that reality is not individuality or exclusiveness but pure being, simple unity. To achieve salvation, therefore, is to be in actuality what the soul is potentially; to rise by means of a transcendent intuition, which no teacher can impart, to the soul's real home; to escape from individuality with all its deceptive shows to that impersonality where the soul, by surrendering its meager empirical self, realizes its true self in union with the divine. Such transcendental knowledge is of course impossible to the average man, and the heaven into which it lifts the soul would seem to him a ghostly sort of dwelling-place; but many rare

spirits seem to have found peace and rest in such a world. The authors of the Upanishads, Plotinus, Eckhart, Spinoza and others could not have written of this transcendental salvation with such a glow of feeling if some kind of inner experience had not seemed to them to justify their language.

Another and a very significant conception of salvation is salvation by faith in a Savior-God. This is more widespread than the average Christian knows. We find it in India where the God Vishnu becomes incarnate and appears on earth as a man from age to age but especially in the incarnations Krishna and Rama. For orthodox Vishnuites Krishna is a real incarnation of Vishnu in a human being and this human being is at the same time truly God and truly man, just as Christ is regarded by Christians as a real incarnation of their God and at one and the same time truly God and truly man. The motive of these Hindu incarnations is the same as that which impels the second person of the Christian Trinity to come down from Heaven and be born of a woman, namely, the compassion of Vishnu for men and his desire to save them. The result of the incarnation is the same in both cases, deliverance, in the one case from the law of rebirth and in the other from sin and the Devil, by faith in the Savior-God and translation after death to the endless bliss of heaven. In Asia Minor, also, as Guignebert¹ brings out, the idea of a Savior-God was widespread before and during the early Christian period, with the additional element of the death and resurrection of the God. Men felt themselves incapable of saving themselves by their own powers as the early Buddhists had tried to do and longed for a Mediator. The Savior-God or

¹ *Christianity, Past and Present.*

Mediator in this system of belief suffers as man suffers and dies as man dies, but he triumphs over death and is restored to life again; and the destiny of the Divine Savior is both the prototype and guarantee of the same destiny for his followers. Symbolically the believer goes through the various stages of the ordeals through which the God has passed, in the confidence that because the God has been saved, he will be saved also. To quote from Guignebert:

Paul's childhood was spent in a milieu thoroughly impregnated with the idea of a salvation obtained by the intercession or mediatorship of a God who died and rose again, whose followers share his destiny by means of a mystic union of themselves with him, shown not only by a steadfast faith and confidence in him, but also, and one might almost say, *above all*, by symbolic and potent rites and ceremonies.

It is impossible not to see that this conception of the Savior-God prevalent in Asia Minor in the early Christian era was the prototype on which the Christian conception of Jesus as the Savior-God was modeled. No doubt Christianity contained ethical elements that were lacking in the current mysteries and philosophies and in its incomparable hero, Jesus of Nazareth, it had an asset of incalculable value; but the theoretical mold into which its ideas, hopes and aspirations were run was not original with it. The uniqueness of Christianity was in its content, not in its form. It assumed the form of a mystery and thus adapted itself to the general religious philosophy of the Mediterranean peoples, but its content was the great ethical inheritance from the

Jewish people and the inspiring personality of Jesus. Its *doctrine* of salvation was neither Jewish nor Christian but Hellenistic.

We have passed in brief review five conceptions of salvation which have played a large part in the religious life of the world—salvation by faith in and conformity to the commands of a religion that proclaims itself as exclusively true, salvation from mortality by emotional participation in the divine, salvation by the way of works, salvation by transcendental knowledge and salvation by faith in a Savior-God. It is not my intention to subject these conceptions to criticism one by one. There is an element of value, no doubt, in all of them and those values must be taken up into any modern conception of salvation that we may ultimately arrive at. I shall be content here simply to formulate in a sketchy way a conception that seems to me to include most of these values.

Whatever their attitude toward the belief in a future life may be, whether triumphantly affirmative or hesitant and doubtful, most modernists would agree that the idea of salvation has been powerfully perverted by its connection with the doctrine of immortality. Through that connection the idea of salvation has sometimes lost all its meaning for character and selfhood and become a mere external means for guaranteeing a happy destiny beyond the grave. When this conception of salvation prevails in a religious community, the spiritual value of this life dwindles until it comes to be regarded as nothing more than a probation for the life to come and the purpose of religion is conceived to be only preparation for death and what follows it. But such a conception is entirely foreign to our modern ideas and ideals. We do not believe that

this life exists for the sake of a life hereafter any more than we believe that youth exists for middle age or middle age for old age. Each age exists in its own right and has its own appropriate responsibilities, privileges and powers; and by entering into the responsibilities, privileges and powers of each state, we get ourselves ready for the use and the enjoyment of the stage that follows. We are gradually reshaping all our thinking under the pressure of the conception of creative evolution, and for creative evolution there is no one final static end for the sake of which everything else exists. Every stage is both end and means, the end for what preceded it, the means for what follows it. Each stage is a vital and necessary part of the whole process and we cannot prepare for any next stage by neglecting any present one. Hence the whole idea of salvation, if it is to have any place in modern life, must be revised so as to eliminate from it all suggestion of a mere reference to the beyond and of a magical preparation for that beyond. To be saved is to be set firmly in the path of the fullest, most useful and harmonious life here and now. Only if we can dissociate the word salvation in our actual use of it from death and the hereafter and make it refer to some vitalizing and organizing process going on in our own personality, can it be retained in our living speech at all.

Moreover, we must dissociate the conception of salvation from the old idea of passivity and mere receptiveness or of a work done on or for the individual by an agency beyond his own personality. The idea of self-activity plays an important rôle in our modern conception of a developing human life. A multitude of movements, academic and popular, strive to awaken the selfhood of the individual and inspire him with a

consciousness of his powers and possibilities. Applied psychology is being used in the business world to that end. Mental therapeutics is rooted in the same conception of the human mind. We are coming to think characteristically of man as a dynamic agency, capable of transforming both his environment and his own inner life. The Great War gave to popular use the word *morale*, and morale just means the result of rendering the soul constantly courageous, dynamic and vital by its perpetual renewal from within. And the effort to dissociate the idea of salvation from its old connection with the idea of passivity seems to be an extension into the religious sphere of ideas that are prevalent elsewhere.

Now there is undoubtedly a genuine place for the idea of dependence in religion and life. The things we cannot and do not do for ourselves are far more numerous than the things we can and do do for ourselves. We are born out of previous lives. We are dependent on the sunshine, the atmosphere and the earth. We are dependent on our family, our community, our nation and ultimately on the whole human race. We are dependent on our ancestors for language, knowledge, art and religion. The human individual, stripped of all association with the past and the present life of our kind, is, as we all know, a mere cipher. But while this is true and ought to be realized with the utmost vividness by each new generation, it is just as true that the sense of dependence has been overworked by Christianity. It has been overworked by Roman Catholicism all along the line and by Protestantism especially in connection with its doctrine of salvation. For two centuries Protestantism has been singing such lines as "Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe," and has preached

so persistently the utter helplessness of man that the more docile of the people have lost all sense of the dynamic energy of the human soul.

But there are two kinds of dependence—the passive dependence of the mendicant who merely begs for charity, who throws himself helplessly on the social order, and the active dependence of the business man who knows that he depends on the law, the police protection, the transportation facilities, the monetary system, and the business opportunities which the social order provides, but labors with might and main to use all his opportunities to the utmost and to reinforce the social order by his own citizenship. It is that kind of active dependence that has been too seldom preached in Christendom. The whole effort of the modern mind to introduce into our religious life the idea of self-activity which has been so fruitful elsewhere is really an effort to take the suggestion of mendicancy out of our sense of dependence and restore to our conception of salvation the dynamic idea of the human soul, which has been so long submerged beneath the idea of its helplessness and passivity.

Again, we must have a new conception of the agency on which we are dependent for our salvation. That we are dependent for our salvation, no one can doubt. The individual man by an isolated effort cannot save his own soul. That idea persisted in would soon bring disaster. We must lay hold on something outside ourselves to lift ourselves to the height of our spiritual being, just as we must lay hold on something outside ourselves to lift our bodies. But that something outside of ourselves on which we must lay hold has been inadequately conceived by orthodox Christianity both Roman and Protestant. The Cross of Christ is a

symbol so woven into the literature and the sentiment of Christendom that multitudes resent any effort to restate its meaning. But such a revaluation is inevitable, and that revaluation must have for its aim the overcoming of the isolation which the Cross of Christ has suffered at the hands of the theologian and its reinsertion in the totality of spiritual facts where it belongs. We must make the Cross represent not merely the sacrifice of one heroic spiritual personality but the sacrifices for noble ends of all the spiritual heroes of all races and of all times. That whole wealth of human experience which was first realized in the souls of the inspired sufferers and pioneers of the past, and which has been embodied in poetry, music, drama, philosophy, science, art, sacred scriptures and social institutions, is the Cross without which each new generation would be helpless and despairing and to which it must cling if it is not to slip back into animalism, barbarism and utter chaos. We are all glad, unless we are shallow conceited egotists, to confess our dependence on the spiritual values which have been wrought out for us by the labors and sufferings of the mighty pioneers. We do not create our values *de novo*: we find them in the great traditions of the race; but we cannot appropriate them externally or passively but only by the intense and unceasing energizing of our own souls.

When we have dissociated the conception of salvation from its mere reference to the beyond and to preparation for the beyond, from the idea of mere passivity and receptiveness, and from its connection with a narrow interpretation of the Cross of Christ, is there any core of solid meaning left that would justify us in retaining the word in our active vocabulary? No doubt we are not compelled to use the word "salvation" at

all, although it is wise to use the great popular words where we can; but if we choose to use the word, we must put a modern content into it, a content derived from history and from psychology. Looking at man in the light of his history and as psychology reveals him to-day we must ask: What are man's worst enemies from which we must try to save him, and what transformations must be wrought in his own mind if he is to escape those enemies?

We need not hesitate long about an answer to that question. Man's first great enemy is his animalism. Adam may be a myth; Hell may be a myth; God's balancing of his mercy and his justice may be a myth, but man's animalism is a palpable reality. Gluttony, drunkenness and lust are writ large over the page of human history. Man is the most intemperate of all the animals. Our domestic animals sometimes eat to excess if they get access to large quantities of food but on the whole the lower animals know nothing of the excesses into which man so often plunges. Instinct regulates their nature far more infallibly than reason and imagination regulate ours. The range of their life is very narrow indeed but within that range order prevails. Not so with man. His range is almost infinite—at least he does not seem able to set bounds to his desire; but the wider the range the greater the possibility of disorder and excess. Animals desire consciously only what they see before them; but man's imagination enables him to conjure up a multitude of things which he does not see, and the image of them in his mind creates desire and impels him to all kinds of ingenuities to realize his desire. Thus man's animalism is more than animal impulse: it is animal impulse plus imagination and a wonderful practical ingenuity.

Man's misery, as Carlyle says, comes of his greatness. When creative evolution broke in on the routine, instinctive life of the animal world and endowed man with a free fancy, reason and ingenuity of his own, it made possible not only the heroisms and sublimities of human life, but also its excesses, its violences and its debaucheries. The corruption of the best is always the worst, and so we find in human society evils which never appear in the lower animal kingdom. Particular appetites, like cancers, grow until they absorb into themselves the strength of the whole system. The drunkard becomes a chronic thirst; the glutton lives for the table; the sensualist feeds his animal impulses on such unholy pleasures and his imagination on such unchaste imagery that in the end he becomes a corrupt mass of lasciviousness. The nefarious white slave traffic of recent decades is a concrete example of what man's animalism is. It is not only animal impulse but animal impulse plus imagination and the most diabolical ingenuity.

Now, whatever wider meanings we may put into the term "salvation," at least it must mean escape from the animalism we have been describing. There must be awakened in the mind of the individual such an attitude of disgust, contempt and loathing toward excesses on the physical plain of life that when he has fallen below his own standards and committed gross abuses of his body he shall experience, when the deed is over, such a revulsion of feeling, such genuine repentance, such a massive scorn for his weakness that the pain inflicted on his selfhood by his own deed shall be a never-to-be-forgotten warning against the repetition of such a deed. He who cannot or will not repent when he has fallen grossly below his own standards cannot be saved from

the powerful downward drag of the animal impulses. And as it is the imagination and the reason which give the overgrown appetite such fearful power, it is by the imagination and the reason that we must regulate and control appetite. The secret of saving the world from that life of the flesh which sinks men lower than the animals is to get possession of the imagination before the greater appetites awaken. If we interpret the word education broadly enough, it would be true to say that salvation from animalism comes through education. Education, broadly conceived, means arousing in the mind genuine intellectual interests; weighting the individual with responsibilities which will regulate his conduct and his use of his time; maintaining those social amenities which help to keep the sexes respectful to each other; stimulating those affections for parents, kindred and friends which nourish the social instincts and prepare the individual for group-life; awakening, through religious appeals, the reverence for truth and character and the eternal Goodness. If education really secured all these values, the first enemy of man would be overcome. He would escape from animalism by turning against it those very powers of imagination and reason which transform his innocent animal impulses into the means of his moral corruption and degradation.

But animalism is not man's only enemy. It is his earliest enemy but if he battles manfully with it in the early years of youth, he may remain safe all the rest of his life. But his salvation is then by no means complete. Next to animalism, selfishness is the most persistent enemy of man's higher life. A man may be sober, continent, thoroughly master of every physical appetite and yet use his self-mastery for purely selfish

ends. The miser is very seldom a glutton, a drunkard or a sensualist. Pride generally keeps its skirts lifted out of the mire. Ambition husbands its energies for its worldly ends. Social caste protects itself rigidly against open and flagrant violations of the proprieties. But the spirit does not necessarily come to its own because the basic, physical appetites have been mastered. Our so-called moral people are often cold, tyrannical, jealous, bitter, narrow and intensely selfish. Humanity has suffered so dreadfully from gluttony, drunkenness and lust that our moral forces have been concentrated against them, and the pulpit and the press have sometimes given the impression that, with these evils conquered, the victory is won. But a sad awakening has come to this generation. Man's greed for gain has assumed giant proportions and threatens to extinguish the life of the spirit. The awful fate of the little work-house children of England, two or three generations ago, which called forth Mrs. Browning's pathetic poem "The Cry of the Children"; the similar fate of little children to-day wherever they are not protected by child-labor legislation; the pursuit of profit without regard to the welfare of those employed; the selling of collective rights or interests for private gain; the frauds which contractors have perpetrated on their country even in time of war; the fearful waste of the continent's resources without regard to future generations—all these phases of our recent and contemporary life spell out one terrible fact about our common human nature. Selfishness as well as animalism means hell on earth. Whether it be the mean jealous kind or the cold calculating kind or the blind colossal kind that is at work in modern industrialism it is the grave of the spiritual life.

Now, salvation must mean the curbing and disciplining of this human tendency. Every spiritual force in human nature must be awakened and strengthened if the higher life of man in this selfish, money-spending age is to be saved. The culture forces such as art, music and literature must be developed to their utmost. The social forces, such as patriotism, humanitarianism, the sense of comradeship, the passion for justice must be made vital in the individual consciousness, so as to resist his absorption into the selfishly individualistic life. The religious forces, such as reverence for lofty souls, the sense of oneness with God, the source of life, the faith in continuity between this life and some larger life it leads to, must be so utilized as to minister to the social and altruistic side of our nature and cease to be what they have often been in the past—incentives to selfishness beyond the grave. We do not condemn the interest which the older evangelicalism took in the saving of the individual soul. It was a legitimate development of the individualism of Protestantism, and Protestantism itself was a noble protest against the absorption of the individual in an ecclesiastical institution. No greater blow for human freedom was ever struck than that struck by Luther when he brought the individual face to face with his God. If socialism or any other collectivist movement in the future should ever make the individual a mere tool of the mass, the whole Protestant movement, in its essentials, would have to be gone through again. We cannot afford to alienate any who work for the development and strengthening of the individual. But the individual cannot be saved alone. For full spiritual development each man needs his brother men. No organ of the body can flourish when the whole body is diseased.

Hence, so long as selfishness shuts other people out of our lives and leads us to exploit them as mere tools for our own ends, we are not saved, no matter how moral and respectable we may be. To be saved is to be lifted out of the isolation which selfishness brings upon us into family love, into patriotism, into humanity, into the great currents of the universal life. Salvation is not the saving of some psychic "atom" called the soul in a world that as a whole is on the road to ruin, but the finding of the true self in the larger whole that is ever developing into a more ideal state of being.

But we have not yet got a full portrait of the saved man. Animalism and selfishness are of course the two most common and obvious foes of man's higher life. No one can escape a hand-to-hand conflict with them. But even when these have been conquered, another foe may arise. The good man may live feebly, joylessly, ineffectively because of chronic moods of fear, melancholy, doubt, agnosticism and despair. It is especially the higher and more sensitive types of mind that suffer from these moods. The effect of mental culture on these minds often seems to be only to throw a more brilliant light on the evils of the world. The brute forces of existence loom so colossal before their imagination that they shrink into themselves in fear and trembling. They can foresee so distinctly all the obstacles in the way of personal and social advance that they suffer from the shock of onset long before the battle is set in array. They fill their minds with the sentiments of Ecclesiastes or Omar Khayyam or Amiel's *Journal* or other similar enfeebling literature until the nerves of action, aspiration and hope are paralyzed within them. Their minds are so confused by endless speculation, and so discouraged by the vain

effort to solve the problem of life by thought alone, that they miss all the joy of living and fail to make any contribution to the common good. Their cry is the cry of the Breton Mariner, "My God protect me! My bark is so small and Thy ocean so vast." Wherever the higher education prevails, this type of people abounds.

It must be evident at once that the great need of this class of people is not more control of the bodily appetites or more unselfishness but more vitality. To preach conviction of sin and the need for repentance to these persons would be like slaying the slain. Their consciousness of the evil is already acute even to the point of the morbid. Nor has the iconoclast any message for them. They are weary and spent with criticism and negation. They do not need the agitator to remind them of the iniquities of the present social order. The results of all these lines of critical and negative activity are so familiar to them as to have become almost an obsession. What they need is new life and faith and hope. If they could be made to feel that the good is more real than the evil and that the evil can be progressively overcome; if they could only touch some deeper spring of life in their own subconscious self; if the faith-impulse or the will-to-believe could be made operative in their lives again and their imagination be kindled into fresh constructive activity; if they could be caught up once more into the sweep and rush of collective enthusiasm; if the old mystical springs of religion could be made to flow again into their parched and withered minds, they would renew their spiritual youth and become active factors in the higher life of their communities. The salvation they need is not from sensuality or selfishness but from the paralysis of

moral and spiritual energy which has been brought about by a dry and destructive intellectualism.

Is there salvation for such people? Can the enfeebling moods of fear, doubt, melancholy and agnosticism be overcome? Is the paralysis of mind and will, from which many of the noblest spirits are now suffering, to be a permanent thing in our modern life? No one who has faith in the inexhaustible powers of the human spirit can believe so. People cannot remain satisfied with the mere description and classification of the phenomena of nature and life which science gives, that is, with mere intellectualism. They want more content in their inner life, more vitality, more psychic power, more personality, more happiness, more play of the imagination, more sweep of horizon, more faith in the significance of human life in the whole process of evolution. Such wants can never be satisfied by thinking alone, although thinking may contribute an important element toward their satisfaction. In the last two or three decades hundreds of thousands of people in America have gained the freer and warmer life of feeling, hope and courage by way of such popular movements as Christian Science, New Thought, Mysticism, Theosophy and Faith-Cults; but the thought-element in all these movements is extremely uncritical and sometimes even credulous. But the persons under consideration here cannot make any effective use of affirmations arrived at in such an uncritical way. Is there, then, no way open to them by which they also may escape from their unhappy prison of arid intellectualism and attain greater freedom and warmth of life?

Certainly there is no one broad highway to this much-to-be-desired condition of mind. Every soul is

unique and achieves its ends in its own unique way. But general directions may be given. We must recognize, for example, that the ultimate problems of life cannot be solved by thought alone. Our scientific people, who depend so completely on thought, are very apt to overestimate the place of thought in life. After all thought is only one element in our total personality, and because it deals with generals and universals is always doomed to miss the unique significance of individual things and fail to answer our more personal questions. Hence there is always value in Carlyle's advice: "Do the Duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The Fourth Gospel declares that "if any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." In other words, when thought fails to solve our ultimate problems, they may solve themselves if we find some worth-while activity into which we can throw our whole self. Action does not take the place of thought; but when our conscious mind is absorbed in action, our deeper, subconscious, more universal mind gets its chance and enables us to make personal adjustments to Reality of which our conscious reflection is quite incapable.

Moreover, we can do much for ourselves by keeping our minds in constant contact with the dynamic thought, feeling, and action of the great moral and spiritual heroes of the race. Some of the great spirits of the past are like storage-batteries where we can recharge ourselves when our energies have run down. It may be that Comte in his calendar of the saints, by which he hoped to bring the minds of his followers into

contact with the mind of a hero every day, made this form of spiritual exercise too mechanical and artificial but the general idea of the calendar is profoundly true. Our spirits renew themselves whenever we touch the living spirit of another man, and many a mighty hero, though dead, may yet speak to us through his words and deeds.

Finally, we may escape from our dry intellectualism into a freer and warmer life by throwing the doors of our minds wide open to the influence of nature, in her great creative moments. The new life in nature calls forth a new life in our own minds. As the sap mounts in the tree, so joy mounts in our spirits and we are strangely stirred. We feel ourselves an organic part of a universe that is tingling with life. Hope awakens in our hearts, and on its wings we soar into a world of faith where we dare to affirm that there is something in the universe akin to our own spirit and that in union with that something we will find rest and peace.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNPREDICTABLE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE MIRACULOUS

"Miracle," says Professor William Morgan, "is playing an ever-diminishing part in religion." "Miracles," says Professor G. B. Smith, "have come to be 'problems' for modern theologians and the truth of Christianity is not made to depend on the affirmation of the miraculous." These statements are true for the present time, but the statement of Goethe: "Miracle is faith's dearest child" is much more true over long periods of religious history. The defense of the miracles of the Bible and especially those connected with the career of Jesus has been a major theme in all Protestant books on Apologetics since the days of David Hume. The whole system of Christianity has been made to rest on the historicity of the narratives concerning the miraculous entry of Jesus into the world and his equally miraculous exit from it. For Roman Catholics the church itself is a standing miracle; through its saints and their relics and holy places miracles are still being wrought and every time Mass is celebrated a miracle is performed by which bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. Multitudes of Christian people, both Catholic and Protestant, believed during the Great War that a miracle had been wrought at the battle of Mons, and multitudes more did not hesitate to pray that God might work a miracle for the victory of their

arms. The prayer of Isaiah: ¹ "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, to make thy name known to thy adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!" might still be heard on the lips of many people in their moments of deepest trouble and fear. The divine has been for so long a time identified with the extraordinary and the marvelous that religious people not only look for God in the miraculous but expect him to show His love for them by working miracles in their behalf. It seems necessary, then, to undertake a constructive criticism of the belief in the miraculous with a view to discovering the motives that lie back of it and the function performed by it, so that we may take up any value it may have had into a larger conception of the divine.

What are we to understand by a miracle? The frankness of Professor G. B. Smith ² in his handling of this question is heartily to be commended. "Manipulating the conception of miracle" so as to make it mean something else than it has always meant to theology is, to say the least, rather disingenuous. To use such language as that of Professor William Adams Brown, "Science knows no single miracle because for science all the world has become miraculous" is to suggest that science really supports the historical faith in miracles which is not at all the case. It is better to define miracle in the old way, as a wonder occurring through supernatural power or as an interference in the ordered sequence of cause and effect by incalculable forces acting from outside the system, and then take up some frank attitude toward miracle as thus defined.

¹ LX i.

² *Current Christian Thinking*, p. 91.

That is what miracle has always meant to its orthodox defenders, and when Dr. A. H. Strong (as quoted by Professor G. B. Smith) says that "in the New Testament Christ took water to make wine and took five loaves to make bread, just as in ten thousand vineyards to-day he is turning the moisture of the earth into the juice of the grape and in ten thousand fields is turning carbon into corn," he evades the real issue altogether. The process of transforming the chemical elements of the air and the soil into grapes and corn is due to an activity resident in the natural order; but miracles, for those who have believed in them, have been just such events as could not be accounted for by forces resident in the world. An enumeration of the greater miracles of the Bible would soon show that: for example, the miracle wrought by Elijah on Mount Carmel, his dividing of the waters of the river Jordan and his ascent into heaven in a chariot of fire, the raising of the dead child to life by Elisha, the virgin-birth of Jesus, his restoration of Lazarus to life, his feeding of the five thousand, his stilling of the storm at sea, his walking on the water, his resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven. It is impossible by any "manipulating of the conception of miracle" to eliminate from these stories the conviction of the narrators that a supernatural agency, not resident in the natural order, was responsible for the marvels described therein. Only Gods and their earthly representatives such as apostles, saints and prophets work miracles and they can do so only because they command a divine power not displayed in the orderly events of nature and human history.

It is perfectly plain to anyone familiar with current religious thinking that miracle in the traditional sense

indicated above is "playing an ever-diminishing part in religion." To science with its overwhelming sense of the uniformity and continuity of nature it is absolutely inadmissible. But outside scientific circles, without any conscious reflection on the matter, the belief in miracles is rapidly waning. As M. Arnold said thirty-five years ago in his once-famous book *Literature and Dogma*:

It is what we call the *Time-spirit* which is sapping the proof from miracles. Whether we attack them or whether we defend them, does not much matter. The human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them. And for this reason: it sees, as its experience widens, how they arise. It sees that, under certain circumstances, they always do arise; and that they have not more solidity in one case than another. Signs and wonders men's minds will have, and they create them honestly and naturally; yet not so but that we can see *how* they create them. . . . Our point is, that the objections to miracles do, and more and more will, without insistence, without attack and without controversy, make their own force felt; the sanction of Christianity, if Christianity is not to be lost along with its miracles, must be found elsewhere.

The intervening years have amply confirmed Arnold's prophecy. The belief in miracles is dying out, not so much because it is being openly attacked, but because there is so little in our current popular thinking to support it. Our task, therefore, is not to attack or defend the belief but to show how it arose and how the need it met can be satisfied in ways that do not affront our

scientific faith in the uniformity of nature or our historical demand for credible and demonstrable evidence.

The belief in miracles cannot arise before man has attained a fairly definite and conscious knowledge of what we now call natural laws. When everything is miraculous, nothing is miraculous. There could be no exceptions if there were no rules, no marvels if there were no commonplace events, no breaks or gaps if there were no continuity. But as soon as the mind has learned to distinguish between the two kinds of events and the divine is identified with the extraordinary, man's imagination begins to indulge in the most lavish creation of marvels. It does this at the behest of two demands of life, the desire to idealize the real and the desire to realize the ideal.

On the one hand many miraculous legends, like romantic stories in the fiction of all peoples, are due to man's tendency to see more in persons, things and events than their bare appearance indicates or suggests. All over the world in pre-scientific ages people have regarded cures that were really due to what we now call suggestion or psychotherapy as due to the miraculous powers of the healer. Professor Hopkins³ tells of a colleague who while at work in Asia Minor cured a workman of blindness by washing the dirt out of his eyes. The next day his camp was overrun with the halt and the blind, who believed that he could "work miracles." In the East anyone who works cures is *ipso facto* more than human. Such facts as these should be borne in mind when we read the stories of the miraculous cures ascribed to Jesus. There is every reason to suppose that Jesus was a powerful healer; he had the power to inspire faith in others; his very presence seems

³ *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, p. 241.

to have had a calming effect upon many, and all this combined with his passionate desire to help the sick and the heavy-laden must have made him the greatest psychotherapist of all time. If his wonderful cures are in many cases raised by tradition to the level of miracles it is just what we might expect. Man wants "better bread than wheaten" and when imagination has something real and out of the ordinary to work upon, it soon idealizes it until the event becomes all that the fond heart can wish it to have been.

On the other hand, man desires to *realize* the ideal. Great ideas and ideals take shape in his own spirit and become wonderfully real to his imagination. As observing parents and teachers know, children sometimes find it difficult to distinguish sharply between actual percepts and images which have been built up subjectively in their own minds. Both the percepts and the images are involuntary, that is, they arise in the mind without any conscious effort to produce them, and they are about equally vivid, so that the child will report what he imagines with the same confidence with which he reports what he has perceived. So is it often with imaginative adults in all pre-scientific groups. In their minds the *ideal* always moves toward actualization in a story or a little drama and once the process of *embodiment* has started, there is very little in uncritical ages to prevent the idea from becoming completely actualized as fact. How far this explains such miracles as the virgin-birth and the resurrection of Jesus as well as the rising of Lazarus from the dead, the changing of the water into wine and other great miracles in the Fourth Gospel it might be hard to say, but certainly it is easy to imagine that *the realizing of the ideal* had something to do with them. This principle would ex-

plain also the belief and claim of the Yogis of India that they can walk on water, fly through the air and in other ways control nature at will. By fasting and taking drugs until he experiences hallucinations and by gazing at some bright object until he narrows the field of his consciousness to the most focalized point possible, the Yogi achieves the mystic trance; and in this trance he seems to himself to be master of the forces of nature, to be able to float or fly as he pleases and then in his more sober moments he translates these visions of the trance into the actualities of the common day. Thus both by idealizing the real and realizing the ideal the imagination makes over the actual outer and inner world into a place fit for saints and heroes to live in.

Probably the greatest source of miraculous legends is the desire of religious people to enhance the repute of some great teacher or leader to whom they have given their faith and pledged their loyalty. In the case of three such religious leaders we can see these miraculous legends almost in the process of evolution.

Certainly Buddha did not rest his claim to the allegiance of his disciples on miracles or on his fulfillment of ancient prophecies: no other religious founder ever trusted so completely to the natural reason and the natural moral idealism of his followers. He does not represent himself as divine or a prophet or a personal Savior or a way of life, but only as a teacher who can tell others how to attain for themselves the salvation from restlessness, desire and suffering which he has achieved for himself. But the legends of after-generations make him a great miracle-worker and magnify the success of his work during his lifetime out of all semblance to the historical facts.

In the case of Jesus, Paul, whose conversion took place long before any of the Gospels were written, seems to know nothing about Jesus as a famous worker of miracles; the earliest Gospel says nothing about the virgin-birth, the genealogies in Matthew and Luke trace his descent through Joseph, and the Fourth Gospel reports several stupendous miracles not reported in the first three. Here we see the miraculous legends growing before our very eyes. As the conception of the nature and career of Jesus held by his followers took on a more and more lofty aspect, there was a constant inner pressure on their minds to represent his life so as to justify the claims they were making for him. I do not say that this pressure was conscious. Legends grow up much more in the marginal than in the focal consciousness, but that they do grow up without conscious deception we see even in such recent cases as Washington and Lincoln. When the Jews asked Jesus to show them a sign, that is, to work a miracle, so that they might believe in him, he repudiated their request in unmistakable words; and yet his activity as a miracle-worker is a large part of the story told by the Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel the miracles are regarded as evidences of his divine claims. So little command over nature has Jesus according to his own statement that, while "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, the son of man hath not where to lay his head," but when the story of his death comes to be told later on, the disturbance of nature caused by it is represented as so great that an unnatural darkness prevails from the sixth to the ninth hour. Plainly, between the actual life of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels a great mass of miracle-legends have come into

being and it is no longer possible to distinguish between fact and legend.

But a clearer case still is that of Mohammed. He made no pretense whatsoever to miraculous powers. He did believe that he had been inspired by God to communicate the divine revelation contained in the Koran, but he disclaimed any power to set aside the natural course of physical events. His followers, however, were not content with such an unimpressive figure. In contrast with earlier religious heroes such as Joshua, Moses and Jesus who had great miracles to their credit, he seemed unheroic and powerless. But legend soon made up the deficiency by attributing to him stupendous miracles such as making the sun stand still, making water flow, and multiplying food and drink for his followers. It may be said that these stories were conscious deceptions, deliberately invented to lift Mohammed to the level of rival religious founders, but while that is possible it is no more probable than that the miracles of Buddha and Krishna were so invented. Legends that pass from mouth to mouth grow so unconsciously and so rapidly that there is seldom any need for supposing that they were deliberately manufactured. As plants begin their growth under the soil, so the legends that gather around religious leaders grow in the subconscious minds of their disciples where the memory of them is lovingly and sacredly preserved.

We have tried to indicate thus far how the belief in miracles arose. Especially we have seen how great religious leaders came to be credited with wonder-working powers. But we have said nothing about the reasons why faith in these miracles persists long after they have come to seem unhistorical and incredible to

those most capable of sifting and weighing the evidences for them.

There are doubtless many reasons for such persistence. There is, for example, the strange capacity of some able minds to keep their science and their religion isolated from one another in watertight compartments. Faraday was a notable illustration of this. One of the most brilliant physicists of the nineteenth century, he was also a member of the Sandemanian society, among the narrowest sects ever thrown up by Protestantism in England. Highly professionalized minds are often guilty of this kind of dualism. They sneer at everything suggestive of the abnormal and the "psychic" in their own time such as psychical research, psychotherapy, theosophy or mediumship, but accept without criticism stories of miracles that are said to have happened long ago. Orthodox clergymen would sniff at the claim of any religious enthusiast such as Edward Irving, the friend of the Carlyles, to be able to "speak with tongues" now, but they would defend the credibility and the spiritual significance of the "speaking with tongues" in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The human mind is capable of immense inconsistencies and this passionate belief in the miracles of a wonderful age long gone by, accompanied by a tough-minded skepticism concerning all the alleged present-day miracles of healing, spirit-return, telepathy, premonition, etc., now being investigated by the psychical research societies, is one of the strangest of them.

Another reason for the persistence of this belief in miracles is the fear of diminishing the grandeur and value of the religious leaders around whom the miracle stories have gathered. The position of Jesus in the

Christian religion as currently believed and preached, both in Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant churches, is so pivotal that any change in men's conceptions concerning him sets up serious disturbances throughout the whole religious system. Christianity has become so completely a religion about Jesus that every miracle-story that enhances the greatness of Jesus in the eyes of the people seems of immense importance. Learned theologians resort to the most puerile arguments in defense, for example, of the belief in the virgin-birth, not because their sense of historicity is shocked by a denial of that belief (as it is shocked when one is told that Jesus was not an historical person at all), for the story had no place in the earliest Christian traditions or in the preaching of Paul, but because the virgin-birth seems to make Jesus more wonderful and divine than he would otherwise be. The traditional doctrine of the Deity of Jesus has become the keystone of the ecclesiastical religion about Jesus and men fear that if the keystone is disturbed the whole arch may fall.

But the most interesting and poignant of all reasons for the persistence of the belief in miracles is the dread people have that, if the right to believe in miracles should be denied, they would be shut up in an iron network of necessity and lose all sense of freedom as well as all belief in God. The divine and the miraculous have been so completely identified that when the belief in the miraculous goes, the belief in God seems to go with it. So long as men can believe in miracles, they are sure that the laws and forces of nature are not the ultimate reality, for the living God can and does set them aside for His own purposes. But when the belief in miracle goes, the laws and forces of nature,

so it seems, become sovereign and God is pushed out of the universe altogether. When the living, sovereign, wonder-working God of traditional thought is thus displaced from the throne of the universe, the mind of the individual who has been a sincere and orthodox believer almost reels under the shock. Tens of thousands of people whose greatest values throughout early life were bound up with the belief in miracles and who have been compelled in later life to surrender this belief could bear witness to the sense of desolation that has settled down upon them for a longer or shorter period. They have felt as if they were in the grip of an iron mechanism or as if they were in a prison where there was not sufficient air to breathe. Miracle has meant for them not so much wonder as freedom, the domination of the spirit over matter, the possibility of escape by divine help from almost any human predicament, and when miracle ceases to be credible, matter seems to close in upon them like an inexorable fate. Few thoughts are more depressing and annihilating when they first visit the mind than the idea that the universe is a mechanism and man a mere cog in the great machine. It is not difficult to sympathize with those who cling to the belief in miracle when for them miracle is synonymous with freedom and the supremacy of the spirit.

And yet the fact that miracles are no longer credible and the full consequences of that fact for our religious life must be frankly faced. It is a mere waste of time, at least among fearless thinking people, to try to defend them any longer. What we must do is to see what place there is after all for the free life of the spirit in a universe where miracles are no more believed to be possible because every change that takes place is

brought about by forces resident within the universe itself. And, after all, the situation in which we find ourselves is not as desperate as the apologists for miracles would have us believe.

As a matter of history it would be easy to show at length that the belief in miracles is always a sign of spiritual weakness. As has been already indicated, the great religious founders repudiate the claim to work miracles. They all feel that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, that the soul of the prophet should speak directly to the souls of his followers, that truth authenticates itself by the inner certainty it produces in the minds of those who embrace it. Matthew Arnold put the point picturesquely when he said: "Suppose I could change the pen with which I write this line into a penwiper, I should not thus make what I write any the truer or more convincing." The great religious founders had the same feeling. They did not deduce the truth they preached from abnormal events in the physical world but received it through a process of inner experience and they desired to reproduce this authenticating experience in their disciples. But those in whom truth is so profoundly apprehended that it becomes its own proof are in any one age so few that always the prophet is called upon to give some sign so that the unbelieving may believe in him. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe."⁴ "And the Pharisees came forth and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation."⁵

⁴ John iv. 48.

⁵ Mark viii. 11-12.

"The Jews require a sign." ⁶ These verses from the New Testament show what the personal attitude of Jesus and Paul toward miracles was. "He sighed deeply in his spirit"—that is an illuminating phrase. It is the inevitable response of every original prophet to the spiritual obtuseness of his own generation. Paul found that the automatisms and other abnormalities that accompanied the conversion-experience which his preaching produced were more highly esteemed than the moral fruits of a changed life and urged upon the Corinthians to "covet earnestly *spiritual* gifts." ⁷ By the higher spirits of any age the transformation of a pen into a penwiper would never be regarded as authenticating the truth of the words written; but, alas, by the uninstructed and the undiscerning the veriest nonsense may be received as divine truth provided the "seer" can seem to work wonders. When marriages are consummated without love and as mere family transactions, all sorts of guarantees must be given and taken, but when romantic love motivates the choice, each commits his or her happiness to the other without any misgivings or merely prudential arrangements. So is it in religion. The mystic, the prophet, the Quaker, even the rationalist, commits his life to the guidance of the inner light, of a self-authenticating truth, but the timid, prudential, impoverished soul who has no wealth of inner experience must have signs and wonders before he can believe. Hence, as we recover the original Jesus and his attitude to these popular demands for a sign, the historic belief in miracles becomes embarrassing not only to Christian thought but also to Christian experience. The faith that demands miracles seems to us

⁶ I Cor. i. 22.

⁷ I Cor. xiv. 1.

too timid and feeble to remove mountains or conquer the world but that is just what the faith of the founders of the great religions actually did. To drop the belief in miracles may be a sign of our spiritual strength rather than of our spiritual poverty.

Moreover, the belief that nature is uniform, that there are no miracles, that no capricious will interferes with the order of physical events and historical processes has become for many a vital part of their religious confidence and mental peace. Emerson calls upon us to "build altars to that beautiful necessity which rudely or safely educates man to the perception that there are no contingencies." During the great war, when everything human was topsy-turvy, when passions hitherto unknown, in great strength at least, were surging in our breasts, when we knew not what the morrow might bring forth, when the moral order seemed to be a mere "scrap of paper," when human reason, under the strain of suffering, disgust and fear, often trembled on its throne, what a consolation it was to get away from the thought of the human chaos and on some moonlit or starlit night contemplate the unbroken, harmonious order of the nature whose children we are! How steadying it was to realize that after the horrible thing should be all over, nature would be found not to have changed her order a whit because of our mad fury! After all, the sense that the order of nature is dependable and cannot be broken in upon by any capricious will is the foundation of our sanity and our peace of mind. It fortifies us in times of fearful human strife to realize that even human nature in its deeper and older levels cannot be much disturbed by the storms that harass its surface, that men and women will still love and found families when the strife

is over, that the constructive impulses of man will reassert themselves, that with a new generation joy and happiness will crown life as of old. We feel stifled when naturalistic philosophies represent the order of nature to us as a soulless mechanism, moving on its remorseless way indifferent to our weal or woe, but the real order of nature which we actually experience never so affects us. We do not complain because the movements of the sun and moon and stars take place with a regularity that can be mathematically calculated. We rejoice that the mighty universe wherein we live has a structure of dependable character and that nothing can happen in violation of natural law. Within that structure we do desire as much freedom and spontaneity as possible, but, whether we are conscious of it or not, our deeper being is only at home in a world where a steady order prevails. As Richard Hooker says:

If celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven, which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintness begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence; what would become of man himself?

We cannot all express our feelings in such eloquent language, but as we read Hooker's words we realize

that below the level of our minds which sometimes demands miracles there is a deeper and older level, evolved long before conscious reflection was possible and answering to the orderly processes of nature herself, which rejoices that the order of nature is constant and regards that order as "the mother of its peace and joy."

Finally, even admitting the uniformity of the order of nature and the unbroken continuity of her processes, it does not follow that all those processes are of a rigid and mechanical nature. The denial of miracle need not involve us in the fatalistic belief that the universe is a hide-bound, cast-iron, completely closed system. We are not impaled on the horns of any such dilemma. Even if the universe is subject to law all the way through, it is quite conceivable that the laws are not all on one level. There may be a hierarchy of laws so that, though each new level is based on the level below it, processes may take place on the upper level that are not possible on the lower one and are not predictable from it. If that were the case the iron rule of the past would be broken, the future would be more than a mere rehearsal of what has already occurred. And that is just what is meant by creative evolution. This new conception of evolution supplies us with all the real values that the old notion of miracle at its best sought to preserve. It holds that the mechanistic conception of the universe which played so destructive a rôle in the nineteenth century thought is false not merely to the facts of life but also to the facts of the lower levels of being. From the atom through the complex chemical element, the inorganic chemical compound, the colloid, the cell, the organism, the minded organism, right up to human personality,

creativeness is the ever-recurring phenomenon which cannot be denied. Instead of being a closed system, the universe is open in the direction in which time is moving and in that direction new beings have constantly been evolved. As the properties and behavior of water could not be predicted by one who knew only how oxygen and hydrogen behave when alone, so from the lower levels in general no one can predict what will appear on the next level. Nature, as Professor H. F. Osburn says, is super-rational, that is, we can never tell from the most rational organization and interpretation of the facts of one level what new creatures will appear on those that follow. No doubt there is law on every level and some subtle connection between any level and the one that preceded it and the one that follows it, but what this connection is we do not know and how the rise from one level to another is achieved we do not know either. Nature keeps her own secrets, but looking at the ascending series of levels, creativeness seems to be the keyword.

As life climbs up this series of levels, it attains ever more and more freedom. Plants are rooted in the soil and have no freedom of movement; but animals from the first can move more or less freely, and in the course of their evolution learn to move with ease and wonderful grace—in the water, over the earth and through the air. The highest animal, man, through his own mechanical inventions, has learned to move with ease through all of these mediums. But life achieves more than freedom of movement. It learns to direct and control its own evolution. Even the lowly, one-celled *amœba*, as Jennings has shown, practices the method of trial and error. Instincts are laid down in the nervous structure of the creature which

guide him toward actions which are preservative of himself and his offspring. By and by consciousness appears and with it an organization of instinctive interests into sentiments and the control of life by purpose and conscience and hope and fear. The creative process called evolution finally creates creatures who in their turn become conscious creators. As General Smuts says: "Evolution traces the grand line of escape from the prison of matter to the full freedom of the spirit."

Now, my contention is that this new conception of creative evolution guarantees to the human being all the freedom and spontaneity that his spirit actually demands. The love of order is as deeply rooted in us as the love of freedom, and all of the latter that we have a right to demand and in the long run do demand is just so much as is consistent with the preservation of the order which we recognize to be the basis of our life. We do not want to escape from the control of the solar system to which our earth belongs and go soaring through the vast spaces of the universe alone, or if we do our friends begin to be suspicious of our sanity. In our best moments at least we do not complain because nature does not fill our lap with the luxuries of life without our labor, for we know that in our free intelligence and in the plasticity of the physical world lies the possibility of an indefinite increase of the necessities of existence. We dare not consider it a hardship that we are subject, as all living creatures are, to the laws of birth and death, activity and rest, growth and decay. We can claim no right to withdraw from society and its pressure on our lives, for we realize, if we are thinking people, that without society we would have had no freedom, either outer or

inner. All the freedom that we have a right to demand is freedom to use the powers of nature for our economic ends, freedom to make the most of the capacities we have inherited, freedom to find our true place in the social order, freedom through repentance and moral struggle to remake our natures after we have undone ourselves by sin and selfishness, freedom to maintain our spiritual vitality by constant renewal of our inner life so long as we live, and freedom to hope that the infinite Reality preserves somehow the values that we seem to drop when we shuffle off this mortal coil. We do not really demand the free will for which some indeterminists have contended—a free will out of relation to everything else and capable of a choice unmotivated by anything in past experience. Such a free will can neither be nor be imagined. All that we demand is the power to choose between the alternatives that present themselves and to guide our choice by our ideal. We know that our past often weighs heavily upon us and that our character has become too stiff and rigid for the flexible purposes of life, but what we then demand is not complete escape from that past but the awakening into activity of some unused power that will help us to make our character more pliable and thus turn the influence of our past toward a new goal.

All these demands are legitimate and if creative evolution is true, all may be met in greater or less degree. The work of creation is not finished. Creative evolution is still going on. The human individual and the human race have still unused possibilities. As the principle of mutation in biology teaches us that we do not know what new species or new qualities of life are being prepared in the unseen laboratory of the germ-

plasm, so in spiritual life there is an unpredictable element which is known only when it reveals itself in the event. Not only is nothing lost in the infinite universe if the doctrine of conservation be true, but the actual universe has more in its hidden depths than has yet been revealed if the doctrine of creative evolution be true; and in these two principles man has all the values and more than all the values which the belief in miracles ever seemed to give him.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT MAKES THE BIBLE UNIQUE?

The uniqueness of the Bible among the Sacred Scriptures of the world is acknowledged by all students of comparative religion. But this acknowledgment must be sharply distinguished from the claim of the orthodox Jews and the orthodox Christians that the Bible is unique because it is the report of a divine supernatural revelation while all other Sacred Scriptures are mere products of the creative imagination of man. The modern student of religions has abandoned that distinction, for he is aware that other religions insist on their divine origin just as emphatically as Judaism and Christianity do. He finds its uniqueness in its literary, moral and spiritual qualities and not in any romantic but unpsychological and unhistorical account of how it came to be.

The continued influence of the Bible in the Jewish and Christian worlds would seem to depend upon the ability of religious leaders to educate people to take the modern attitude toward it, that is, to find its merit in its moral and spiritual values rather than in its dogmatic significance as supernatural revelation and still retain a warm and vital interest in it. How far this shift of attitude can be successfully made remains to be seen. It seems difficult for many people to penetrate below the bare surface of things or to get beyond the show-side of life. If a man has wealth, position, power, a handsome

face and a striking figure and uses all these possessions and gifts in a sufficiently spectacular way, he catches the public eye easily and excites wonder and admiration; but if his stock-in-trade is only character, moral goodness, æsthetic sensibility, knowledge, power of abstract thought, unselfish service of his fellows or other equally unspectacular qualities, he seldom attracts wide public interest and if he gets his head above the crowd for a moment, many people in that crowd are apt to think that he is something of a fool because he has voluntarily missed the things that seem to them most worth while in life. And such may be the fate of the Bible among many people when it ceases to be for them a talisman or a divine code of laws or a supernatural revelation and has to win their interest entirely on its own literary, moral and spiritual merits. It may become a classic whose greatness they acknowledge but whose pages they seldom ponder over.

Such a fate for the Bible would certainly be a calamity both for the individual and for society. No doubt many of the sentiments which found their first great expression in the Old and New Testaments have been taken up into much of our own literature, art and institutional life, so that the Bible, though no longer read, would continue to influence us. But it is much to be doubted whether any literature will ever appeal as simply, directly and powerfully to the best that is in man as the great passages in the Bible have. Of course they have seldom appealed to people simply on their own merits, for until the last half century nearly everybody shared the idea that they had the value of revelation; but even when that idea has been abandoned, there is a power in the Bible that is found nowhere else and that is not likely ever again to find so

adequate an expression. The world is still producing much poetry and philosophy but no one is excelling Homer and Plato in their own lines. They remain for us a possession forever, for their unique qualities are not likely ever to be reproduced. So is it with the Bible. For reasons which we shall discuss later on the mental conditions under which most of the Bible was produced in the first place as well as the literary conditions of the English people when it was first translated, were such as to insure certain qualities that are quite beyond the reach of the human mind at the present day. As we see from "the record of the rocks," nature seems to have a definite place in the life-series for every species she creates and does not produce, let us say, a mammal until its hour has struck; so, in the evolution of the human spirit, certain creations seem to be possible at one period which cannot be repeated at a later period. The Bible is the unique product of a unique people in a unique set of circumstances and its peculiar qualities are never likely to be achieved again. Hence it seems worth while to work away at the task of reinterpreting it for each new generation, in the hope that it may remain for our children and grandchildren not merely a great religious classic but also a possession of the general mind and an effective agency in the molding of human life.

Preliminary to any such use of the Bible as is desired by the modernist religious leader, there must be a fairly thorough understanding of the reconstruction of its literature and of the history of the Jewish people which has been established by the higher criticism of the last four or five decades. It is hardly possible for a student of to-day to realize how extremely difficult it was for the students of a former generation to

understand the Old Testament. We generally knew Hebrew far more thoroughly than students do now, but we had hardly any conception of the actual evolution of the life, institutions, religion and literature of the Hebrew people. We often knew much of the text of the Bible very well, but the Bible—at least the Old Testament—as a whole was a chaos and its relations to the actual experiences of the people who produced it were seldom even inquired into. But to-day, thanks to the labors of an army of men in Europe and America, the chaos has been reduced to order. Many points in the history no doubt are still very obscure; many problems of date and authorship will never be settled; many important texts are still and may always be corrupt and therefore unintelligible; but on the whole it is possible for a student with a mind fairly well trained in history and literature to get in a comparatively short time a good working idea of the history of the Hebrew people, of the nature of the Old Testament literature, of the leading figures in that history and literature and of the circumstances under which most of the materials of the Old and New Testaments came to be written. It is not my purpose to go into this matter in detail here. In popular histories such as those of Cornill and Kent and in popular introductions such as those of Gray and Moore for the Old Testament and those of Peake and Bacon for the New Testament and many other equally commendable books, the non-professional reader can find all the help he is likely to make use of and all he really needs, to get an intelligent idea of the nature and the evolution of the Old and New Testaments.

But important as this kind of study is, it is only preliminary to the psychological problem which is that

of genesis and to the philosophical problem which is that of interpretation and evaluation. When we have once rearranged the Bible so that we can place each part of it with a fair degree of certainty in its proper historical setting and have secured as correct an exegesis as we can of its more important passages, we must go further and inquire into the nature of the mental processes out of which this literature issued and into the quality of the experiences which it expressed.

If the reader will turn back to the second chapter of this book, he will find that I made there a distinction between the deeper, more racial, universal, emotional, spontaneous and effortless mind whose organ of expression is the imagination and the voluntary, directed, specialized, isolated mind whose organ of expression is the highly individualized reason. Now the Bible for the most part is an expression of the first type of mind. The thought of the Hebrew authors is very profound but primitively simple. It springs out of an insight which is in no wise due to deliberate observation, analysis and inference like our modern scientific knowledge but rather to a subconscious rumination on the unanalyzed experiences of the writers and their communities. This fact may be illustrated in three ways. In the first place, it is seen in the richness of the Hebrew language in words and phrases that picture objective concrete situations both natural and mental, and in its utter poverty in words that express the subtler relations between ideas or that make complex sentences and complex statements of thought possible. This fact was elaborated by Renan long ago but very effective use has been made of it by some recent writers on the Bible as Literature, notably by Professor J. H. Gardiner in his book bearing that

name. The dearth of connectives is especially noticeable. The conjunction *and*, the loosest of all connections, is used almost without variation in multitudes of passages. Having few connectives except *and* the Old Testament writers are unable to tie long sentences together and so the extent of discourse seldom passes one or two lines. As Renan says: "Wholly preoccupied with the present thought they do not construct in advance the mechanism of the phrase and take no thought of what has gone before or of what is coming. One would say that their style was like the freest conversation caught in its flight and fixed directly by writing."

But though they have no words except for concrete objects of the external world, though their sentences are short and loosely connected, though many of their words have not broken the umbilical cord that binds them to the primitive sensations out of which they were born, still their writing as a whole is swift, vivid and solid to a degree that is hard for us with our more dull and abstract vocabulary and our more complex and slow-moving sentences to achieve. Renan shows most interestingly how many of their ideas are made meaningful by a reference to the physical experiences that accompany them; for example,

anger is expressed by rapid and animated breathing, by heat or boiling, by the act of a noisy breaking; *discouragement* and *despair* by a melting of the heart; *fear* by the loosening of the reins; *pride* by the holding high of the head, with the figure straight and stiff; *patience* by long breathing and *impatience* by short breathing; *desire* by thirst and *paleness* and *pardon* by a throng of metaphors

borrowed from the idea of covering, hiding, coating over a fault.

It may easily be seen, then, why the narrative style of the Old Testament writers is so simple, direct and vivid; why there are no subtleties in their writing; why Professor Gardiner can say: "The simplicity of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* expresses far more ratiocination and consciousness of the finer relations between ideas than does the most advanced style in the Bible narrative"; and why most of the Bible is so easily understood by the simplest readers. The thought of those major portions of the Bible of which we are now thinking is never abstract but it is often as profound as the deepest intuitions of human joy and sorrow, hope and fear can be.

In the second place, although the Hebrew imagination worked intensely within a definite limited field, although lyrical religious poetry, which expresses the cry of the individual heart in its moments of joy and anguish, faith and doubt, has never risen higher than in some of the Psalms, although the moral insight of the prophets has never been surpassed, the Hebrew lacked the creative, constructive, representative imagination. He could not get out of himself to be some other person or to interest himself in other situations than those which he had actually experienced. The book of Job might seem to belie this statement for its form is more or less dramatic, but after all it is not dramatic in the sense in which Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare and Goethe are, for it expresses the emotions of the writer himself and gets its intensity and elevation from so doing. From the literary and cultural point of view this is no doubt a serious limitation.

The life of man, we are accustomed to think, has been immensely enriched by the play of the creative imagination. The fictitious characters of the drama and the novel have influenced human conduct almost as much as historical personalities. The inventive genius of the world's great dramatists and story-tellers is one of the proudest boasts of the human family. There is, no doubt, something narrow in the spirit of a race that cannot get out of itself long enough to play with imaginary characters and imaginary situations. But this narrowness may have its compensation. When it goes along with moral intensity and yet succeeds in escaping fanaticism, it gives to the spirit a concentration and a power of self-committal which must be reckoned as a form of human genius. A great deal of the highest psychic energy of races gifted with dramatic, representative powers has been withdrawn from the actual moral world where problems of individual development and social adjustment have remained unsolved for lack of adequate attention, only to be exercised in play-acting and in make-believe. Whether this has resulted in the ultimate enrichment or the ultimate impoverishment of the races referred to is a question that has been passionately debated, but at any rate the Hebrew genius was too much in earnest to have any interest in such play-acting. The whole concentrated power of the prophetic spirit was turned toward the solution of the problems of conduct, and though the majority of the Hebrew people did not share the prophetic zeal or profit much from the prophetic moral insights, the intuitions of the prophets remain nevertheless the greatest contribution ever made by a small group of men to the moral idealism of the Western world. Movements of expansion and

movements of concentration are both needed in human history and the genius of the Hebrew people was for moral concentration. The Bible writers had no sense of the possibilities of the creative imagination and no interest in the invention of characters; they were completely preoccupied with their own moral emotions; but the stream of their life was as deep as it was narrow and so the Bible has a moral intensity and sublimity which have more than compensated for its lack of the great representative, dramatic creations.

In the third place, the Hebrew lacked the power of abstract thought which is the organ of our science and philosophy. The so-called books of Wisdom, as the name suggests, might seem to contradict this statement but they do not. The character of the Hebrew language made reasoning in the modern sense of the term impossible; but, then, the limitations of the Hebrew language were in the first place due to the limitations of the Hebrew mind. Language follows rather than precedes thought, for until there is a new thought to express, the need of language is not felt. Etymologically the word philosophy means the love of wisdom and in that sense the Hebrews were philosophers; but, historically, philosophy has always involved analysis, abstraction, comparison, continuous chains of reasoning, inference and speculation and of these there is no trace in the Wisdom-literature. The book of Job discusses a problem that has always occupied the moral philosophers, namely, the problem of evil and human suffering; but it discusses it in a language that is poetical and concrete throughout and that renders feeling rather than abstract thought. The Wisdom of all the so-called Wisdom books is expressed in a similar language. The wise men know nothing of the

logically constructed chains of reasoning which are everywhere else found in the books of the moral philosophers; they simply find themselves in sure and ardent possession of certain moral judgments which have been distilled by the subconscious processes of their own minds from their observations of human life and conduct. If a Socrates had button-holed them on the market-place and asked them to give reasons for the wisdom they preached, they could not have answered him except by reaffirming their judgments with a more ardent tone of conviction. Not until we come to the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of Paul do we find complex sentences, continuous passages and speculative ideas that remind us of our own thought-world. The Wisdom of the Old Testament writers, the teaching of Jesus in the first three Gospels and indeed a good deal of the best in Paul's letters completely lack the elements of conscious analysis, logical inference and speculative construction. Their thought moves entirely on the level of empirical observation, imaginative picturing and direct intuition. They state their moral judgments one by one without any thought of order, logical structure or proof because they have never felt the need for these literary and argumentative devices. They are concerned merely to make the imagination of the hearer or reader *see* the picture, in the faith that, once seen, its truth will flash into the soul and find a permanent home there.

The character of Hebrew literature is determined, therefore, by the quality of the Hebrew mind rather than by its supposed character as divine revelation. It is unique, not because it is the vehicle of a truth which had its origin in another realm of being, but because the Hebrew mind, though it lacked the constructive

imagination and the power of abstract thought, had a genius for moral concentration and moral intuition and a wonderful gift of simple, direct, concrete, vivid speech, and because the Hebrew race, for a thousand years and more, had a unique social and political experience which called into play that genius for moral concentration and moral intuition. We need not feel called upon to speculate as to how this unique Hebrew genius came into being. To those not accustomed to the variations of human heredity it may seem entirely miraculous and inexplicable. But the modern mind has ceased to cry out Miracle! when it comes upon something that it cannot explain. It simply recognizes the limits of its explanation. It acknowledges the immense fecundity and variability of all forms of life and especially of human mental life and hopes that in the future problems of race-psychology will be less insoluble than they seem now.

Our next task will be to formulate a little more precisely than we have yet done just what is unique in the contents of the Bible and what makes us desirous of having the Bible read and studied even by those who do not regard it as divine revelation.

The uniqueness of the Bible has been insisted on thus far but we must hasten to add that its contents are not all unique. We soon discover that two streams of religious thought and feeling run side by side, the priestly and the prophetic, and that, though the first need not be opposed to the second always and absolutely, it nevertheless differs profoundly from it and can set up no claim to originality. If we say at once that the uniqueness of the Bible is to be found in the Books of the Prophets, the Psalms, the Synoptic Gospels and the non-theological portions of the apostolic

letters, it will be obvious that the whole element of cultus which bulks so large, especially in the Old Testament, is not to be regarded as the peculiar creation of the Hebrew people. They inherited it from their Semitic ancestors and from the other peoples with whom they had come in contact. In no sense were the ceremonials, rituals, feasts, assemblies, sacrifices, etc., the natural or inevitable instruments of an ethical faith. The prophets make this perfectly plain and nothing but a wooden, unimaginative, artificial theory of inspiration which construed all scripture as divine revelation could ever have blinded the eyes of orthodox Jews and Christians to this fact. Here are a few of the great prophetic utterances that have come ringing down through the centuries: "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of lambs."¹

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from them; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.²

For I desired mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not.³

I hate, I despise your feast days and I will not

¹ Samuel.

² Isaiah.

³ Hosea.

smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols, but let judgment run down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.⁴

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? ⁵

The wayfaring man, though a fool, could hardly fail, one would think, to understand the import for social worship and for personal piety of these powerful and never-to-be-forgotten utterances. And yet the natural sense of men in the matters of religion has often been completely nullified by the artificial theory of inspiration already mentioned, as well as by the hypnotic effects of priestly ceremonies and incantations. That certainly must have been the case with the Hebrew people. If this uncompromising repudiation of the cultus by the prophets, the unique moral geniuses of Israel, had been accepted by the people in large

⁴ Amos.

⁵ Micah.

numbers, the cultus could never have occupied as large a place in the Bible as it does. There is no mystery about it. The prophets were not only in advance of their own age but in advance of the mass of the people of all ages, including our own. If the priests and the dogmatists would take a holiday for a generation and allow men of the prophetic spirit to shape the moral education and the religious worship of the children, the ethical faith of the Bible might be fairly tried; but priests and dogmatists do not take long holidays and so the old cultus, which goes back to the cave-man, and the old conception of inspiration, which goes back to the shaman and the orgiastic worshiper of Bacchus, continue to do duty in the Christian church and the Jewish synagogue. Thus it comes about that the prophets of the eighth and seventh century B. C. are still for the majority of religious worshipers mere voices crying in the wilderness.

It must not, however, be inferred that the prophetic message had no influence over the cultus. It did initiate reforms that purged the cultus of its grosser parts, such as idolatry, human sacrifices, sacred prostitution and polytheistic practices. From the time of the publication of Deuteronomy the popular abuses of the old cult were more or less successfully destroyed or forced to take to cover, but the better parts which were left, never were adequate instruments of an ethical faith and survived only through the force of long habit and through the power which the priestly class is always able to exercise over the hopes and fears of an ignorant and discouraged people. In the actual ministry of Jesus the element of cultus had a negligible part. His faith, as we now know, was not something entirely new but the ethical faith of the prophets,

deepened, broadened, freed from the element of nationalistic and racial particularism which still clung to the older teaching and set forth in prose poems that touched the heart, set free the intuitive powers of the spirit and gave wings to the imagination. But at the very time when Jesus was preaching in Galilee that the first principles of the religious life are the love of God and the service of man, the altars of the temple in Jerusalem were running red with the blood of the sacrificial animals. We are told that at a single paschal feast as many as a quarter of a million lambs would be sacrificed in the precincts of the temple. And so we need not be surprised that, after the death of Jesus, the old cultus crept back again into the churches which sprang up here and there as the faith spread, and though it was not in the beginning and is not now an organic part of the living ethical religion of Jesus, it has been regarded as such by the majority of Christian people and during long periods of time has completely overshadowed what was unique in the teaching both of Jesus and Paul. The war against the old non-ethical cultus is never done. At this very moment it is being waged anew in the church of England. No great church has ever been able to effect more than a working compromise between the old cultus and the ethical faith of the prophets and with any diminution of moral strenuousness the age-long tendency to cultus reasserts itself.

The greatest thing in the Bible, then, is its prophetic or ethical faith. It is this that gives it its unity, that makes the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries B. C. the brothers of Jesus and Paul in the first century A. D. and that makes Christianity the child of the older Hebrew prophetism. It has both its Godward and its

manward side. The prophets are just as sure of God as the priests are: they are quite untouched by the doubt and cynicism of Ecclesiastes. They never swerve from the belief that the world is under the sovereign rule and guidance of a wise, just, merciful but majestic and all-powerful God. They do not hesitate to put the highest qualities they have found in life on the throne of the universe. Their religion is a pure ethical idealism, for they find nothing higher in the world than righteousness, mercy and love. And the highest duty that their God demands of His worshipers is to serve His children and to be as He is. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" One of the prophetic psalmists voices the purest possible ethical piety when he cries: "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness." Paul but repeats the prophetic message when he declares: "And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." With such ethical sentiments as these a sacerdotal cultus can no more mix than oil with water. So long as the Bible is read by the people with an open mind, a lively imagination and some power of discrimination, the old sacerdotalism can never triumph again for more than a moment; but if the Bible should cease to be read with understanding, if the active churches should become more and more sacerdotal and sacramental, if the educated classes should give up religion and the churches altogether, the future might witness a widespread reaction to a religion of sheer cultus and priestly domina-

tion. The education of the few is real but the education of the masses is only skin-deep. Just now multitudes think themselves sufficient for all the problems of life without the priest, but in the back of their minds they are only cave-men and any widespread disaster or any continuous hardship or any narrowing and mechanizing of their life might send them scurrying back to the man and the institutions that would promise them divine, supernatural protection from an untoward fate.

All that we have said thus far may be brought to a climax with the statement that the Bible, as now understood, is really a textbook of liberal religion. In the light of the claim of Protestants of the Fundamentalist variety that the Bible is wholly theirs, the above statement seems absurd. And yet it is entirely true. Refine their doctrine of the atonement through the blood of Christ as they may, it derives from the cultus and not from the ethical faith of the prophets. All the sacerdotal and legalistic parties of his time and he insistence on the priestly status of their clergy, all their contempt for the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, only show the complete sway of the old cultus over their minds. They belong to the spiritual world that antedated the Hebrew prophets. The insistence of all orthodox groups, Jewish and Christian, on the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible is plain evidence that their spiritual life has fallen below the high level of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments. The prophets sought no such guarantee for the truth they preached; for them it was inspired simply because it was inspiring. The whole stress of the Roman Catholics, the Fundamentalists and the orthodox generally on the doctrines of the Church as

an object of faith is entirely unprophetic and unethical. For the prophets faith may produce doctrines but the doctrines are not the objects of faith. Faith's object is always "the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" and its purpose is to produce righteous conduct in those who contemplate and worship its object. There is hardly an element in popular Christianity to-day whether Roman Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, Greek Catholic or Fundamentalist that does not derive, directly or indirectly, from the cultus and legalism rather than from the ethical faith of the prophets, the really original element in the Bible.

The Bible, we repeat, as now understood by Biblical science, is a textbook of liberal religion. Most, if not all, of its greatest heroes were at war with the sacerdotal principle in religion and with the principle of monarchy and aristocracy in civil government. Elijah in the great scene on Mount Carmel⁶ opposes himself to four hundred and fifty priests and throughout his life to the government of Ahab and Jezebel. The story of his career is full of legendary matter but it is perfectly plain that he was a fearless rebel against both the official religion and the statecraft of his time. His defense of the plain citizen Naboth against the King and Queen who had taken away his vineyard, the home of his fathers, against his will and slain him because he resented their injustice, is one of the great episodes in the history of world-democracy. No less significant is the scene⁷ where the prophet Nathan beards King David in his palace and charges him to his face with lust, meanness and cruelty in the case of Uriah and his wife Bathsheba. The doom of tyrant-

⁶ I Kings xviii.

⁷ II Samuel xii.

nical kings was contained in Nathan's straight-from-the-shoulder charge. "Thou art the man," as in a seed. Priestcraft and prophecy never countered one another more dramatically than when Amaziah, the priest, and Amos, the prophet, clashed on the streets of Bethel. The words which they hurled at one another⁸ might well be engraved on the walls of every liberal church in the world:

Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the King's chapel and it is the King's court. Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel.

Never was religion combined more beautifully with the work of the peacemaker, that disturber of all militaristic and conquering nations, than by Micah when he declared in a moment of ecstatic longing for the cessation of war:

He (God) shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make

⁸ Amos 7.

them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken.

There has always been a tug-of-war between the makers of war and the makers of peace to get the popular force of religion behind their cause, and the makers of war have generally been successful; but the great prophets of Israel have been the leaders of the other side.

Equally prominent has been the leadership of the prophets in the fight for social justice: "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity." "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek." "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Pages might be filled with moral sentiments of this kind from the prophets, and they all go to show that these daring men were the pioneers of what we now call social democracy. Of representative government as the political agency of a social democracy they knew nothing, but of the moral relations between men that must be the basis of a social democracy they were the first clear-eyed exponents.

No less is the New Testament essentially a textbook of liberal religion. From the beginning of his ministry to its close Jesus found himself in conflict with the sacerdotal and legalistic parties of his time and he owed his crucifixion to their hostility. His condemnation of ill-gotten wealth, his contempt for show and

hypocrisy, his sympathy for the poor and oppressed, his love of peace, all place him alongside of the Hebrew prophets as an emancipator and a moral innovator. Even Paul, although by an unimaginative exegesis of the more theological portions of his letters he has been made the source of a dogmatic and legalistic interpretation of Christianity, is, in the great matters, on the side of the prophets. In the subjective aspect of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, we have the triumphant assertion of human freedom, the self-assertion of the spirit. The exhortation to faith means for Paul the rejection of authority, breaking with tradition, bursting the chains of legalistic bondage. Those who oppose the questioning and critical spirit in religion to-day often quote Paul in defense of their position but they look only at the letter and not at the spirit of his teaching. When a man makes his final appeal to history and experience and rouses the opposition of all the conservatives of his own time as Paul did, he must be placed among the innovators of the religious world even though later conservatives use fragments of his teaching to build up a new orthodoxy.

The position which we reach at the end of our reflections on the Bible is, therefore, a strange one. To the Roman Catholic and the Fundamentalist the Bible is essentially a law-book, a code of beliefs, a textbook of authoritative doctrine on all the ultimate problems of human life and destiny. To the critical modernist, on the other hand, it contains only one thing of eternal value—the ethical faith which presents justice, peace, mercy, loving kindness, truth, purity and self-forgetting service as the ends of religion. The faith which is sung by many of the Psalmists and preached by

the prophets of both Old and New Testaments alike, might be bound up with many theological systems but is dependent on none. Its value has been obscured since the time of the earliest Hebrew prophets by its enforced connection with a cultus and legalistic system that sprang from quite other roots in personal and social life, and since the days of the Protestant Reformation by its connection with a theological system which, while it formed the mind of those who embraced it, crushed their emotions and imagination and hence made their ethical life too formal, inflexible and unsympathetic. The task of the future is to disentangle this eternal ethical faith from the ancient cultus, from a formalistic legalism, from dogmatic theology and find for it such an expression in poem, parable and ritual as shall give it a fair chance to make itself fully felt in the consciences and lives of men. To that problem we shall turn in our next chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE PRESENT VALUES OF WORSHIP

A sentence from Emerson may fitly introduce this chapter: "Worship stands in some commanding relation to the health of man and to his highest powers so as to be, in some manner, a source of intellect." If this statement is not to some extent true, the human race stands convicted of an aberration colossal in its proportions, for into his worship man has put an incalculable amount of his hard-earned material goods, of his living hopes and fears and of his personal and communal enthusiasm and enterprise.

To tell the whole story of man's worship, of the methods and means used, of the buildings in which it has been performed, of the formulas, sacred words and creeds that have been repeated in its services would require a whole series of volumes. Reverend John F. Sullivan of the diocese of Providence requires a book of 370 pages and 77 chapters to give a mere sketch of *The Externals of the Roman Catholic Church, her government, ceremonies, festivals, sacramentals and devotions*. A book descriptive of the methods of worship pursued in the various religions of India comprised under the term Hinduism would be much longer still. Man has at least shown his ingenuity and imaginative versatility in the forms and exercises of his worship. Candles, bells, holy water, vestments, holy oils, the

rosary, the scapulars and incense; the missal, the breviary, the ritual and the litanies; the mass, the sacraments and the prayer-wheel; the holy places and the holy days; the religious buildings such as temples, basilicas, cathedrals, pagodas, mosques, churches and chapels; religious sculpture, painting, poetry, music and the decorative arts; bloody animal-sacrifices, fruit-offerings and the communal eating of sacred food; pilgrimages, processions and festivals; the reading of sacred scriptures, the recitation of creeds, formulas and prayers, the chanting of psalms and the singing of hymns; acts and postures such as kneeling, clasping the hands, bowing the head, prostration of the whole body, obscene rites, wild dancing, fasts, abstinence, painful self-torture—each one of these groups of the phenomena of worship could be illustrated by a close student of the history of religions so fully that the reader would ere long become weary of the recitation. The elaboration of the service of worship varies all the way from the silence and formlessness of the Friends' service to High Mass on Easter Sunday in St. Peters at Rome but though it seldom reaches the magnificence and complexity of the latter, it still more seldom dwindles to the simplicity and bareness of the former. But whatever the degree of laboration of its details, some form of worship has been engaged in by humanity all down the ages with the evident conviction that some indispensable values were secured thereby.

It would not serve our purpose here to spend any further time on the methods by which worship has been carried on. Our purpose throughout is, so far as possible, to trace every phenomenon of religion back to its source in human experience and to see what psychological values are thought to be gained thereby. And in

pursuit of this general aim we must concentrate here on the motivation and the values of worship.

Professor Pratt¹ has made a very useful distinction between objective worship and subjective worship. Objective worship he defines as the type which aims at making some kind of effect on the Deity and it is well illustrated by the Chinese official cult of Heaven, the worship of the Hindu temples and the worship of Roman Catholics. The Hindu temples and the Roman Catholic cathedrals are not so much auditoriums as homes of the God or Gods and everything that takes place in them is for the God's glory. The presence of people in the temple or cathedral and the active participation of the people in the service are not essential to the success of the service, provided the ritual be carried out in the prescribed way and the priest be duly authorized to perform it. When people are present they may participate in the service in an emotional and imaginative way and thus draw great subjective benefit from it but the original and primary purpose of the service is in the interest of the Deity and not of the worshiper.

Subjective worship, on the other hand, undertakes to induce some desired mood or belief or attitude in the mind of the worshiper. There are many degrees of deliberateness in the maintenance of such a worship and many combinations of the subjective and objective elements in it. The Jainas in India, for example, have no belief in God as an existent Reality outside the thought of man but they carry on an elaborate worship of images for the sake of the subjective effects it produces on them. The Friends have a much richer and more objective religious faith than the Jainas but their worship is deeply subjective, for they have no creeds,

¹ *Religious Consciousness*, pp. 291-309.

formulas, ceremonies, set hymns or scriptures—indeed they do nothing until the spirit moves them. Ethical societies do not officially stress the element of worship at all but they are nevertheless substitutes for churches and their aim is purely subjective, that is, they seek to induce some moral attitude or conviction in the mind of the attendant. The worship of the more radical Humanist churches is subjective in the same way. In the worship of the more orthodox Protestant churches, especially those of the evangelical tradition, subjective effects are deliberately sought—the preacher desires to save or awaken or inspire the souls of the worshipers—but all this stress on the subjective purpose of worship goes hand in hand with a fairly solid body of objective beliefs; and the preacher might say that, though his immediate object is the subjective saving of souls, his final object is serving the Master or glorifying God.

But a further analysis would show that even the objective type of worship is subjective after all. Man is always in search of values. His mind is so constituted that he experiences an ever-increasing number of wants, both physical and psychical, and everything he does has some reference to the satisfaction of some of these wants. It might be inferred from this statement that he is an utterly selfish creature but such an inference would not be justified. Man can never get away from his “self” or act from motives that do not arise within his “self,”—if we make the term “self” inclusive enough to embrace his instinctive nature as well as his more conscious nature. But conduct is not “selfish” simply because it is motivated by some want arising within the “self”: it is selfish only when it springs from some motive that is lower than the best one possible at the moment. Everything we do has as its aim the satisfaction

of some want and the nobility of our conduct is determined by the refinement, elevation and social quality of the wants we are satisfying. Hence worship can never be purely objective in the sense that we glorify God without any reference, conscious or unconscious, to the values and satisfactions which worship achieves for us. To demand that kind of "purity" or "unselfishness" of the worshiper is quixotic and unpsychological. We can no more get outside of our wants than we can get outside of our skins or our minds. If we say that man seeks values or satisfactions in all his worship, or, to use the language of Job, that man does not serve God for nought, we do not convict him of selfishness unless we also show that the values or satisfactions sought are of a low or carnal order. Man pursues values in the very holy of holies and the quality of his worship depends on the quality of the values he seeks. While acknowledging, therefore, the usefulness for certain purposes of the distinction between objective and subjective worship, it seems better here to think of all worship alike as motivated by a desire for values and to study it from the point of view of the worth or rank of the values sought.

The critic of religion often gloats over the crudeness of the values sought by the primitive man through his worship. There is certainly no denying the crudeness but it can hardly be astonishing to any one who holds to the evolutionary account of man's history. The religions of the world are the creations and at the same time the revelations of the inner subjective lives of races and mirror all their coarseness and selfishness as well as all their spiritual aspirations. Religion is the product of the whole nature of man and as such reflects the whole range of man's sensuous as well as

of his spiritual being. The values sought by primitive man when he worshiped were the common goods of life, such as food, protection from danger or death, success in war and the chase, children, health or any other material things of which he felt the need. He believed that the spirits or the Gods could secure for him what he desired and that he could move their will by sacrifices, praise or humble entreaty. His worship was, in its externals at least, a sort of bargain and sometimes a shrewd bargain at that as in the case of Jacob:²

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Nothing could well be more crude or childish than such a prayer, and worship would have passed away altogether long ere this if the values sought had continued on this level.

But the values sought did not continue on this low level. The evolution from spell to such a prayer as that of Jesus, "Not my will but thine be done" covers a long period of time, is accompanied by an immense sifting and clarifying of human thought, and involves a profound transformation of man's hierarchy of values; but, in spite of the difficulties on the way, the evolution has actually been achieved for the higher spirits of

² Genesis xxviii. 20-21.

the great religions. Prayer begins among the most violently interested acts of life but it ends, as in the prayer of Jesus quoted above, in a pure act of trust and self-abandonment. The prayer of Jacob is a revelation of the worshiper's petty concern for his egoistic interests; the prayer of Jesus reveals the complete liberation of the spirit from all egoism of an individualistic kind.

Now, no one would contend that modern worship often reaches the sublime height of disinterestedness which Jesus attained, but at least such a sublimation of the ends sought in worship as his prayer reveals is what the freest spirits of the religious world seek to-day. We do not worship that we may secure food or shelter or protection or raiment or any other material thing: we rely on our own arms, supplemented by the mechanical devices which our brains have invented and manufactured, for every physical thing which our life requires. We have mastered enough of the laws or uniformities of nature to be able to use the natural forces of heat, falling water, electricity, ethereal wave-lengths, etc., for our economic purposes and for purposes of transportation and transmission. While the Oriental for the most part still prays for the material goods of life, Western man has abandoned that form of worship, not because he is less selfish than the Oriental but because he has learned to secure the goods he desires in another and more immediate and controllable way, and because he no longer can believe in the capricious interference of God in the natural order of the world. When modern man worships, therefore, he does not seek the lower values. If these lower values are all that he wants from life, he does not worship at all. Indeed those who do not worship at all constitute a very

large class now in every capitalistic country where industry has been largely mechanized and scientific thought has spread. The deeply religious visitor from the Orient is often shocked by the evident lack of personal piety in our Western populations. But the contrast between Oriental piety and Western lack of piety is not necessarily as abysmal as it seems. Whenever Oriental piety pursues only the lower values—and that it often does this the Oriental himself would not deny—it does not differ, except in form, from the Western lack of piety which pursues the same values in a completely human way. The real differences between people must be found in the values pursued, rather than in the means used in the pursuit.

It becomes our business, then, to inquire concerning the values which modern worship seeks, if it no longer expects material goods to be given in answer to its prayers.

The most widespread, if not the most significant, value of worship for modern man is the satisfaction of his gregarious or social impulse by the use of a common ritual. It is a well-known fact that communities cling tenaciously to ritual and, if they are denied it in one sphere of life, will set it up in another. The democratic governments and courts of America have very little ritual or ceremony but millions of Americans find compensation in their fraternal orders. As a Presbyterian a man may vehemently resist the introduction of a ritual into his church, but as a Mason he will take his part in a burial service which makes elaborate use of rites, symbols and vestments. The common use of a ritual seems to generate in multitudes of people an emotion which quickens and sensitizes the whole or-

ganism. This is a social fact which cannot be gainsaid and it calls not only for explanation but also for frank appreciation by those who themselves make little response to ritual.

To understand the present power of ritual over people, we must cast our minds back to its psychological origin in the life of early man. In every vital function of life certain actions are carried out which are both pleasurable in themselves and in the success which they achieve, and this very pleasurableness sets up in the mind a tendency to repeat the acts without any references to their primary ends. This repetition of the actions for their own sake is the source of ritual. As Professor Whitehead says:

It was a tremendous discovery—how to excite emotions for their own sake, apart from some imperious biological necessity. Mankind was started upon its adventures of curiosity and feeling. . . . In this primitive phase of religion, dominated by ritual and emotion, we are dealing with essentially social phenomena. Ritual is more impressive and emotion more active, when a whole society is concerned in the same ritual and the same emotion. Accordingly, a collective ritual and a collective emotion take their places as one of the binding forces of savage tribes. They represent the first faint glimmerings of the life of the spirit, raised above concentration upon the task of supplying animal necessities.

Professor Malinowski adds to the foregoing account of the psychological origin of ritual a necessary word as to its social origin:

The ritual establishes the existence of some power or personality from which tribal law is derived, and which is responsible for the moral rules imparted to the novice. To make the belief impressive, strong and grandiose, there is the pomp of the ceremony and the hardships of preparation and ordeal. . . . The whole tribe is mobilized and all its authority set in motion to bear witness to the power and reality of the things revealed.

“A collective ritual and a collective emotion represent the first faint glimmerings of the life of the spirit”—these are very instructive and suggestive words. If there is any place in the evolution of mind in minded organisms where the *human* mind may be said to begin, it is the place where it abstracts the image of a thing from the thing itself and begins to play with the image. And a collective ritual and a collective emotion would seem to be a good illustration of such a point in mental evolution. They bind the group together, not on the basis of mere animal economic necessity, but on the basis of a common psychic interest. The group begins to be able to control its members by making them dependent on it for their most thrilling mental experiences. To be outside the collective ritual and the collective emotion is to be minus some of the best things in life. And when the group becomes conscious of this new method of control, it mobilizes its whole strength so as to use the new method to the utmost.

But we might admit the great value of a common ritual in the earlier stages of human history and yet fail to see a similar value in it now. Certainly human life has become more completely individualized as civilization has advanced and individualization, it

might be contended, has always involved breaking away from the hypnotic effects of a communal ritual. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to create a ritual which shall have a common and acceptable meaning for any large number of modern critical people. Both of these contentions have to be admitted. The hypnotic effect of a great ritual is very obvious in the most ancient of Christian churches and the difficulty of creating a form of worship which shall be acceptable to people who insist on preserving their mental integrity while they worship is known to everyone who has tried to do it. But neither of these facts should be allowed to blind us to the real and indisputable value of an acceptable ritual when the creative genius of man succeeds in producing one such. We cannot afford to neglect any agency by which the minds of men and women can be organically related to each other. Economic individualism is a highly disruptive force in modern society. The incessant movement of our population from place to place breaks any communal bonds that otherwise might begin to be formed. A score of factors in our social and economic life are acting as a very disturbing and often as a destructive influence in the family. Our political life is more and more controlled by professional politicians who enter it for the sake of a livelihood rather than as patriots performing a duty involved in the very nature of their citizenship. True, we are not devoid of massive collective enthusiasms. Great crowds experience common emotions in watching baseball, football and pugilistic encounters. The movie is responsible for a good deal of common feeling. The radio is probably establishing invisible bonds between millions of minds. Fashion is the mightiest of all unifiers. But admitting the value of all these agencies as

cohesive factors in life, plainly they unite people only on the lower levels of experience and in a very temporary fashion. No great civilization can be held together in times of stress and strain by such superficial enthusiasms of the popular mind. We need a common emotion that is excited by common participation in a ritual that makes use of our higher ideals and ideas. It is vain to hope that any ritual now in wide use can ever prove satisfactory to all those who are willing to take the name of Christian. But such a ritual, if it existed, would certainly be a great social asset and, until it arrives, we must join with like-minded people in the use of the one that best meets our needs. It is quite true, as Whitehead says, that "religion is what the individual does with his solitude," if we think of it from the point of view of originality and progress; it is also true, as Whitehead says again, that "what should emerge from religion is individual worth or character"; but the religious mood cannot be sustained in its original warmth and intensity without vital contact with other souls, and worth of character can be gained and maintained only through efficient coöperation with others in a common cause.

A second great value in worship is that of self-recovery. This may seem, on the surface, the very opposite of the value already emphasized. My first contention was that worship has value because it associates us emotionally with our fellows: this one is that worship has value because it throws us back upon our deeper selves and recovers for us sentiments and ideals that might otherwise slip away from us altogether. The contradiction, however, is only apparent.

It may seem strange but it is quite true that one may be dehumanized by too much superficial and anony-

mous contact with humanity. When we become involved in an immense number of superficial human contacts in our daily lives, a certain impersonality, a certain moral insensibility and obtuseness grow upon us until we lose much of our original power to be interested in and to interest others. Any inner life that we may have is necessarily concealed from those with whom we have most of our contacts and for lack of stimulation from kindred souls it languishes and often almost disappears. Dealing with things is not as deadening as dealing with people on this mechanical and superficial level, for one expects no response from things and is not irritated by things as he is by people. The multiplication of these artificial relations between people in our great modern cities has produced a sort of inhuman callousness on the surface of personality at least, and this threatens to penetrate deeper and dry up the very sources of human generosity and comradeship. A man must find relief from such merely external contacts somehow if he is to save his deeper selfhood from extinction.

In other cases, the trouble is not so much barrenness and formality of human contacts but rather the excessive domination of the whole personality by the will. Men of action who bring to bear upon their tasks a highly energized will tyrannize over themselves as well as over others. They dare not "loaf and invite the soul" lest they dull the keen edge of their resolution. They keep their volitional nature always up to concert pitch. Every spontaneous element in their personality which might disturb the voluntary and directed actions of their mind is kept down under the hatchway. The life of action is habitually assumed by them to be the whole truth and vocation for man. To be one hundred

percent efficient is their aim. They bring all sorts of stimuli to bear upon themselves or their employees when any signs of volitional fatigue appear. They prize wealth but generally far less for what it brings than as an evidence of their success. Their will grows so domineering that they cannot brook any opposition or really discuss anything with anybody and thus loosen the grip of their will upon their mind. But if in spite of their high-pressure efficiency they grow stale and fail to achieve their ends, or if ill-health forces them to take a holiday from their enterprizes, or if any spiritual crisis in their own lives forces them to reflect upon their philosophy of action for action's sake, the game is up. The incentive to work which has been urging them on is so pathological that as soon as they are forced to reflect on it, it loses its power. They often become so completely disorganized that life loses its meaning and they either end it or drift about like derelicts at sea. They have suppressed all the other elements of their personality so completely that when the will collapses, the other elements are too feeble to reinforce it and set it on the throne again.

In other cases the trouble is due to the dominance of the intellect rather than of the will. Men concentrate so exclusively on the life of thought and investigation that their intellect develops at the expense of their personality. The universities are full of men of this class. William James, however, was a brilliant exception. That he was a man of keen intellect no one who ever sat at his feet or who has read his *Principles of Psychology* would deny, but the most lasting impression he made on his students was due to his personality rather than his intellect. He was vital, human, many-sided in his interests, warm in his enthusiasms and he

made everybody realize that his total being was much richer even than his books. But it is tragically true of multitudes of intellectual men that their cognition is a leech upon their personality. Even Darwin, great as he was, had to confess that many of his earlier interests had dwindled away as he became more and more absorbed in grinding out laws from his observations of the behavior of living creatures. And this growth of intellect at the expense of personality is a tragedy for society as well as for the individual. It accounts for that gap between general life and the representatives of learning which is so much to be deplored. Great popular institutions like the church, politics and the press go one way and our learned institutions go another, so that the men of intellect tend to be shut out from the spheres of life where their influence is so much needed and to be limited to writing for and talking to one another. By such concentration on knowledge and such isolation from the general mind, learning becomes dehumanized and the popular mind becomes more and more a prey to emotionalism, demagoguery and an incessant and selfish propaganda.

Now, for all these classes of people worship ought to have great value. Such human contacts as it involves are generally with like-minded people and are far removed from the formality and artificiality of the relations from which the first class suffers. If our deeper social nature has not withered up altogether, we must be warmed into fresh life every time we join sincerely with our religious group in common song and meditation and prayer. The Christian church no doubt has all the defects which its critics are constantly pointing out; it is, like the religion which it preaches, a creation of the human spirit in its effort to further its

higher interests and often exhibits many of the weaknesses of an imperfect and evolving humanity; it often is too much dominated by priests, dogmatists and worldly-minded officers; but it still remains the one institution, open to all, in which warm, friendly, human contacts on the higher moral and spiritual levels of life are possible. A few privileged persons may make such contacts without the Church, but for the masses of the people it alone provides what they sorely need. Social contacts on the lower levels of life, as we have shown, are more plentiful to-day than ever before. Gregariousness has come to its own in America with a vengeance, after the long years of solitary individualism incidental to our older agricultural and small-town life. But gregariousness does not necessarily involve mutuality or active sympathy or imaginative understanding or common ideals. It may be more like the congregating of crows in the woods after the day's foraging has been done than like the higher spiritual relationships of which our human need is so great, and these it has been the task and privilege of the Christian church to provide. In the church we recover our deeper selves which would wither up if they had to depend entirely on the human contacts which our ordinary business life affords.

Equally necessary is worship for those whose spiritual personality is crushed by the tyranny of their own domineering will. No one can enter understandingly into any vital form of worship without feeling the tension of his practical will relax a little. In the quiet of the church where people sit in a meditative mood, where the solemn tones of the organ resounding through the sacred building awaken feelings of awe and mystery as old as the human race itself, where the

mighty words of prophet, poet and saint that have come down through the ages and have voiced for many many generations their highest aspirations and beliefs about life are heard and affirmed week after week and year after year, it is hardly possible for any man of action, unless he is a petty egotist as well, to think very confidently of any program of action for action's sake. When the mood of worship masters him, a richer self awakens. Instead of driving himself by a will tuned to the concert pitch, his mind is turned by a sort of effortless attention toward other ends than mere action. And when the tension of his practical will is thus relaxed, bigger thoughts than those of his daily life come out of their hiding place. When he measures his personality against the Cosmos or his wisdom against the total experience of the human race, how small he seems to himself, how insignificant his strenuous career in the whole ongoing of humanity! In his worship his sanity is restored, he gets a renewed sense of the wholeness of life, he measures his little self against the infinite and comes out of his church, often if not always, a humbler and less tyrannical man.

So, too, with the intellectual man. A rational worship induces moods that are deeper, more emotional, more universal than those which dominate his mind in the library or the laboratory. Worship, no doubt, involves thinking, as watching a play of Shakespeare involves thinking or as the life-long love of a mother for her son involves thinking. But it is a different kind of thinking from that of the classroom. It is more spontaneous, more uncontrolled, more imaginative, more like reverie and for that reason more refreshing and exhilarating. The thinker who is also a master in the art of worship returns to the deeper sources of his

life when he practices that art. The thought of his library or laboratory keeps him in touch with the bony structure, as it were, of the universe and with the intellectual life of his confreres and peers, but his worship gives him back the total universe with all its rich tones and shapes and colors and mysteries and the whole range of man's spiritual life—his poetry, his music, his architecture, his painting and his religion. It is one of the immense calamities of history that the church has been so conservative, so wedded to its ancient creeds, so unprogressive in its ethical program that many of the higher minds of all races, to save their moral integrity and their intellectual self-respect, have felt obliged to withdraw from it altogether. It has been disastrous for the church, for, without the liberalizing influence of the great thinkers within its own walls, it has generally become reactionary and thrown itself across the path of intellectual progress; and the thinkers without the sensitizing, humanizing, mellowing and harmonizing influence of a rational public worship have often sacrificed the richness and many-sidedness of their personality for a sharp, pugnacious intellectual intensity which in the long run has proved harmful to their insight and originality and especially to their influence on those who might otherwise have been helped by them.

The greatest values of worship may be gathered up into the statement that it taps sources of power that are too often closed to the human spirit. Primitive religion was undoubtedly a search for goods but it was even more a search for power. Savages often eat the flesh of a brave man whom they have slain in the hope that his courage will pass into them. The feeling of power is one of the most pleasurable emotions man

ever experiences. Power over the forces of nature, power over the sick bodies and sick minds of men, power over spirits such as mediums are supposed to possess, power over thronging audiences, power over musical instruments, power over complicated machines such as engines and aeroplanes, power over a great government, power over the complexities of a mathematical or philosophical system, power over the imaginations and souls of many generations of people—these various forms of power are desired by the abler men and women more ardently, perhaps, than anything else that life has to offer. Compared with such powers, mere goods are unimportant. Religion began with the worship of *mana*, a magic force of wonderful potency. The worshipers desired to get this *mana* for themselves or to get it used for their benefit. And this notion of *mana* no doubt was based on their own experiences. They had felt in their own mind the uprush of sudden thoughts, inspirations and enthusiasms and had noted what unusual things they could do under their influence; they had experienced that accession of power which comes to men when they follow some magnetic leader; they had taken part in group activities such as war-dances, totemic solemnities, initiation ceremonies, public mournings and had observed how mass-excitement and mass-enthusiasm lifted them out of their ordinary selves and endowed them with an energy they could seldom, if ever, command when alone. And from these experiences and from the extraordinary activities of nature which they observed, they drew the inference of a mighty power or *mana* which, if they could only possess it, would enable them to achieve the ends which their hearts desired. It was called *mana* or *oudah* or *manitou* or *wakonda* or *orenda* among dif-

ferent peoples, but always it meant the same thing—a magic force of wonderful potency which it is of the greatest advantage to possess and control. Anyone who had this force was revered, both in life and after death in the hope that some of his *mana* might be captured by the worshiper.

This may seem a very primitive notion and yet it is the vital thing in all religion. What the religious man always desires is power—unless he is a sluggish creature looking only for goods. Religion has been so over-intellectualized by dogmatic theology and rationalism that the church is often more insistent on orthodox thinking than on powerful personalities and abundant life. But real religion seeks for power. The value of all the great objects of religious worship is to be found in the *mana* they possess, and if they possess no *mana*, they have no value, however sacred they may seem to traditional theology. The Bible is full of *mana*. Hundreds of thousands of intelligent and free-thinking people could testify that, when they read the prophets, their minds experience a sort of moral stimulus or shock, such as their bodies receive from an electric treatment at the hands of their physician. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah are full of *mana* and so are many of the greatest Psalmists. We enjoy the literary power of some of their writings and we value them all as rare historical materials; but above all else we prize them for their dynamic moral power—they rebuke our moral cowardice, they shock us into a sense of the futility of all mere verbal ritual, they put God so squarely on the side of righteousness. Likewise Jesus and Paul are full of *mana*. The stories of the miracles of Jesus were suggested by the power of Jesus over the neurasthenics and psychasthenics of

his time. The legends about his birth and resurrection that grew up after his death tell of the immense power he had over the imaginations of his contemporaries. He taught, so the Gospels say, as one having authority and not as the Scribes and Pharisees—his *mana* was not traditional but personal, original, fresh from the very fount of power. The same thing is true, only in a lesser degree, of Paul. There were traditional, theological elements in his mind and unfortunately the theologians have seized upon them and made them seem more significant than they were. But they had no vital relation to his own original experience. His letters distinctly must be classed as belonging to the literature of power. On their highest reaches they have wonderfully telling phrases and marvelous spiritual insights but we cannot conceive Paul as deliberately seeking these as literary men do or as polishing his phrases until they express the very shade of meaning he desires. They come spontaneously out of a soul that is fairly bursting with the power of its intuitive thought and moral passion. If ever a man illustrated Emerson's phrase about the volcano's tongue of flame coming up from the burning core below it was Paul. He was rich in *mana* and one cannot touch his ardent spirit without receiving some *mana* from him.

I cannot dwell here on *mana* as the central meaning of God since I shall devote a chapter to this topic later on, but in the midst of all our present-day discussion about God it must not be forgotten that God means *mana* or power or He means nothing significant for our lives.

The final purpose of public worship, therefore, is power. We assemble in some common religious home that we may be brought into touch with God, the cos-

mic source of *mana* and with all the mighty dead who have created the great spiritual tradition of the race, in order that we may ourselves be recharged with some of their dynamic power. If we conceive of public worship on any lower terms than these, we are not living up to our highest privileges.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATURE AND VALUE OF FAITH

No fact of our inner life has been more completely misinterpreted than the experience called faith. It is, as all modern psychology shows us, a natural and inevitable manifestation of the will-to-live, an attitude of striving and adventure profoundly rooted in our affectional and volitional nature, a disposition prior to all knowledge and, indeed, the driving force behind all knowledge, and yet it has been denied its natural parentage and treated either as the supernatural progeny of another world or as a sort of illegitimate child of reason. Pope Leo XIII defined it thus: "Faith is that supernatural virtue by which, through the help of God and through the assistance of His grace, we believe what He has revealed to be true, not on account of the intrinsic truth perceived by the natural light of reason but because of the authority of God Himself." Father Knox declares that "the intellectual duty of a Christian is to resist the natural tendency of his reason and believe what he is told."¹ Hodge, a famous Calvinistic theologian of a former generation, defined faith as "the organ for the supernatural and divine." The old statements that one used to hear: "We are justified by faith alone without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own" and "Faith is the first of the theological virtues," place the emphasis on belief rather

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1924, p. 322.

than on any movement of the affections or the will. No doubt the belief-element involved in faith as thus defined is not intellectual in the ordinary sense of the word but it stands nearer to the intellect than it does to affection or volition. In a somewhat similar way rationalism defines faith as simply a persuasion of the mind concerning the truth of any proposition. It is thus solely intellectual and is only a stronger form of opinion.

The trend of thought at the present, however, is in a quite different direction. Faith is now defined as a special attitude, a disposition of the will toward its object. The object, of course, is discovered or constructed by the intellect, but the relation toward it which we call faith is not a matter of mere belief but one of commitment and of trust. A few brief modern definitions will make this clear. "Faith is the readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in advance. It is in fact the same moral quality which we call courage in practical affairs."² "Faith is the will to idealize and to control the actual by means of the ideal."³ "Faith which is an active faith in the reality of the ideal is the very breath by which humanity lives and it will reconstitute itself afresh so long as the race endures."⁴ "Faith is something very different from belief on authority or from a balancing of probabilities; it is trust in the rational, the beautiful and the good as the ultimate reality and might in the universe, the eternal yea of our soul to the highest that has met us in the field of our experience."⁵ Obviously it is impossible to

² James.

³ Poc.

⁴ Pringle-Pattison.

⁵ W. Morgan.

reconcile these definitions with the preceding ones. They belong to entirely different worlds of discourse. The former definitions identify faith with religious belief; the latter make faith a vital attitude of the mind toward all the objects in which it is supremely interested and then conceive religious faith as differentiated from other forms of faith, not by its psychological nature, but by the character of the objects toward which it is directed. We shall proceed in the direction suggested by the latter definitions.

It will help us to formulate more sharply the conception of faith which these last definitions involve if we distinguish between the faith-attitude and the faith-belief. We shall deal with the faith-belief first.

Every student of history knows that faith attaches itself to many different objects. Any existent or conceivable being whatsoever that seems to have some supreme value for man may become an object of faith. That object may be a person or a book or an institution or a cause or an abstract idea or a utopia. The person may be a God—Yahweh or Allah or Ahura Mazda or Vishnu or Shiva; or a religious hero such as Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, Zoroaster or Confucius; or a lesser religious figure such as St. Francis, Luther, Fox, Wesley, Chalmers, Channing, Moody or Mrs. Eddy; or a military hero like Napoleon, Wellington, Grant and Foch; or a political hero such as Bismarck, Gladstone or Lincoln. Upon both these ideal and these concrete figures the faith of millions and in many cases hundreds of millions of human beings has been lavished. The book may be a Sacred Scripture like the Bible or the Koran or the Vedas or the Zendavesta or a modern work like Wesley's *Sermons* or Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health with a Key to the*

Scriptures, or Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, or Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, or Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, or Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. These have all been and are to-day *Bibles* for many people. The institution may be a country or a city or a political party or a church or a college or a family. The cause may be a political reform or an æsthetic fashion or a philanthropic enterprise or foreign missions or Bolshevism or Fascism or a crusade against vice and intemperance. The abstract idea may be as bloodless and apparently unromantic as the *Unmoved Mover* of Aristotle, or the *Substance* of Spinoza, or the *Absolute* of Bradley, or the *Essences* of Santayana. The utopia may be democratic or aristocratic or oligarchical or monarchical. But in every case alike, when the object seems of supreme value, it awakens a state of faith in the mind of the devotee which inspires him to commit himself more or less completely to it. The object may be very ancient and traditional, as in most cases it is, and be accepted because it comes to each new generation with an ever-increasing prestige; or it may be accepted just because it is novel and cuts straight across the path of tradition or because it is the individual's own discovery; or it may be something that only the far-distant future can possibly bring into being. But man's capacity for faith is so great that, let the content and source of the object be what they may, the faith-state of the mind will attach itself to it if only the object can be made to seem of supreme value for some major interest of the individual's life. The will-to-believe has so powerful a drive behind it that, before the critical faculty is wide awake, it clings to and draws support from objects that, to critical minds, seem completely devoid of real substance

and meaning. Consciousness is fundamentally purposive and dynamic and only secondarily critical, and whatever seems to serve some worth-while purpose is easily believed in.

The faith-attitude, we have said, does not create its own object. That object is not given to the mind as the old theory of revelation implied but is discovered or constructed by the mind as it explores, subconsciously and consciously, the complex universe in which it finds itself. But, once the faith-object has been discovered, the faith in it becomes more and more intense as the value of the object grows for the believer. And as the faith-attitude increases in intensity, the mind becomes less and less capable of subjecting the object of the faith to scrutiny and criticism. A narrow but intense faith which has lost all power of reëxamining and revaluing its object has much more energy than an enlightened faith. The entire energy of the believer's will goes into his belief and when the object of his belief is some supernatural being to whom all power is ascribed and complete willingness to use his power for the believer's welfare, the faith of the believer lifts him to a level of concentrated fanatical zeal such as few human beings ever attain. That type of zeal is found in all the great religions. It also displays itself now and then, though with a less degree of intensity, in the field of political life, as in Germany before the World War, in Fascist Italy now, and in all revolutionary movements. As Benjamin Kidd says: "The influence of a collective ideal upon the minds of the young under conditions of emotion is incalculable." Once faith has fixed itself definitely on some imposing religious or political object and all doubt as to the transcendent value of that object has

been removed, the mind of the believer can be easily raised to a perfect frenzy of activity and devotion. No other human agency has such power, either for defensive or offensive purposes, as an intense and unquestioning faith in some sublime object, divine or social, which is believed to be of supreme value for man. "Faith removes mountains," not by calling to its aid the miracle-working power of a supernatural being but by raising the spiritual energy of man, which is seldom completely harnessed for action, to its highest potential.

We see, then, that the tap-root of faith is to be sought in our affecto-motor rather than in our intellectual nature. The intellect discovers or constitutes the faith-object and is responsible for all the ideas about it that we may entertain. But the presence of the object and the traditional ideas about it in our consciousness does not necessarily bring the faith-attitude into being or activity. Many believers in all sorts of orthodoxies, religious and political, are quite devoid of a passionate or effective faith in them. The big family Bible is more often for show than for daily use. Only when the faith-object appeals to an emotional and volitional interest that touches us to the quick does it evoke the reaction that is rightly called faith.

Faith is rooted in the psychological necessity of assigning values to our experiences. The world is not merely something that has existence for our cognition: it also has value for our feelings and our will. As life unfolds we gradually establish a hierarchy of values. Things that seemed of supreme value at the beginning of life often drop low in our scale of values before life closes. There is a constant shifting of the

rank of our values all through our earlier years. Sometimes all our values settle down pretty much on a common level: no one thing seems much more valuable than another. Sometimes the energy of desire is so feeble in us that we are not capable of throwing ourselves with ardor into anything. In these cases faith will be a very tiny stream, whether its object be religious or political or personal. But when a more or less permanent hierarchy of interests has been established and those at the top seem to us of supreme significance; when, moreover, the total volume of our desire or libido is unusually large and our community is stirred along with us by a lively interest in some one of our supreme values, then the conditions for a powerful demonstration of faith are all to hand. Epochs of faith are always those in which some old but still significant value is being attacked and defended or when some new value is fighting its way into recognition and acceptance. When men are willing to fight for their values, life has meaning and a great emotional drive; when they are too indifferent to their values to care whether they persist or not, life loses its zest and the decay of civilization begins.

Two inferences are suggested by what we have said thus far. In the first place, faith is necessary to vigorous living. It is a dynamic or *sthenic* emotion and increases the energy of the one who experiences it. A person to whom all things were equally valuable or to whom nothing had any value would be mere driftwood in society, if he were possible at all. The energy of life must be concentrated and localized or else it becomes ineffective through its diffuseness, and faith, hope and love are the means by which this concentration becomes possible. These dynamic emotions attach us to definite

objects and cause our life to gather about these objects. Without parents, relatives, wife, husband, children and friends for our affections to gather about, our sense of humanity would not take root; so without ideals, without supreme spiritual heroes, or without a God for the religious consciousness to cling to and focus itself on, life would be lacking in its supreme dynamic.

This fact indicates the limits of all criticism. We all experience an immense satisfaction at first in the exercise of the critical faculty. Generally we have suffered from the repression of some ancient creed or custom and when we learn how to break our fetters and actually succeed in doing so, we feel a great elation of mind and a new stimulus to our sense of self. That is, criticism in its earliest stage is just expanding life demanding room in which to grow. But that stage soon passes. Life demands not merely room to grow in but also food to grow by. It is one thing to reject the faith-objects of our fathers; it is quite another thing to live without faith-objects altogether. The mere critic of the faiths of others soon becomes a rather anæmic and lifeless creature. Only creation can thrill our spirits through and through and creation is impossible until we perceive some supreme value, either ideal and as yet unrealized or some actual object that we have not yet made our own. Faith is the great creator of values and it also supplies the energy by which we pursue values. The secret of Christian Science, New Thought and other Faith-cults lies in their emphasis on faith. They surround the lives of their patients with an atmosphere of unhesitating and unceasing affirmation. They do not discuss or analyze or defend their beliefs. They simply affirm and reiterate them until the faith-attitude of the sufferer is

evoked and the mood of negation, questioning, doubt and despair is overcome. That these cults lead to a rather questionable credulity we shall soon see but obviously whatever values they create are due to their success in calling into play the active faith of the patient.

Faith, I repeat, is necessary to vigorous living. He who does not live forward to something not yet realized is not living a full human life at all. When we have no active ideals but live only in our natural instincts and only use our minds to meet their demands, we live about as near the animals as men can. When we live entirely on inherited capital and have little or no share in the economic hopes and fears of our fellows, the tang and zest of life are difficult for us to capture. When we live completely in the world of hoary tradition and custom and accept our æsthetic standards, our religion and our politics from our fathers, we have no part in that living social process by which the culture of a nation is kept fresh and healthy and dynamic. Faith always has an object that is more comprehensive than any individual, and living toward that object gives reach, amplitude and intensity to a life that otherwise might lose itself in its own littlenesses as water in the sand.

In the second place, the value of faith cannot be completely estimated without considering the worth of its object. It has just been affirmed that faith is necessary to vigorous living but history is full of the story of faiths that have become fanatical and driven men to pursue objects that were not socially significant. There is no more romantic story in the history of North America than the story of the Jesuits as told by Parkman. The energy, the patience, the endurance,

the courage, the self-sacrifice which these missionaries displayed in their efforts to carry Christianity to the Indians were literally heroic. Their zeal has seldom if ever been surpassed in the annals of missions. The story of their heroism kindles the moral nature of the reader as few stories do, until he begins to reflect on the nature and worth of the end they sought. If they had conceived their mission in a broad way and labored for the education, the moral training, the economic stabilization and the social reorganization of the tribes of Indians in whom they were interested, their labors would have been heroic without any qualification; but when we discover the meagerness of the purposes they tried to further, how they risked their lives to put a drop of holy water on the brow of a dying Indian, how passionately they believed in the efficacy of mere external rites and ceremonies, how completely other-worldly their whole missionary program was, our admiration for their heroism suffers a distinct chill. We recall the words of the Apostle: "They have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge." We are slow to question the worth of so intense a faith but in the end we are compelled to acknowledge that if the object which faith pursues does not embody some aspect of man's supreme values, namely truth, goodness and beauty, then the faith which pursues it, however passionate and self-sacrificing, wastes the precious energy of the human spirit to no purpose.

The program of moral and religious education, therefore, is not merely to produce in people the faith-state but also to subject the object of their faith to constant scrutiny and labor to make it the embodiment of man's highest values. That has been for three or four decades, and still continues to be, the task of con-

structive criticism in the field of religion. The faith of the Protestant Christian has gone out quite uncritically toward the Bible as a divine revelation, toward Jesus as conceived by the great Creeds of the Church, and toward God as a divine Being, transcending the universe and calling it into existence by His fiat. But modern historical and scientific knowledge makes it quite impossible for reflective people to hold this faith in its old forms. In the recent past in America the work of analyzing and reconstructing these ancient objects of belief has been dividing the churches into two parties. The one party contends that the sole task of the church is to awaken and vigorously sustain the faith-attitude toward the faith-objects as traditionally received. Criticism of the faith-objects, they say, inevitably lessens the intensity and therefore the moral value of the faith-attitude. This judgment is no doubt sound. Any confusion of mind about the goal of faith slows up our actual pursuit of that goal. And as this party is passionately eager to secure the moral results of the faith-attitude, they cannot forgive those who, as they say, divert the church from her true mission of awakening faith to the merely intellectual task of overhauling and reconstructing faith's objects. The other party, however, contends that unless criticism reconstructs the objects of faith and presents them in thought-forms acceptable to the modern mind, the faith-attitude and all the moral stimulus it brings will become impossible in another generation or two. While the first party contends vigorously for the faith of the fathers, the second party tries to lay a foundation for the faith of their children and grandchildren. It is an inevitable but for all that a painful situation. When good men contend against bad men, the fight

seems natural and wholesome. But when good men contend with good men over their respective values, moral energy that is sorely needed for constructive purposes seems to be spent with no gain whatsoever. But there is no known way of escape from this clash of differing loyalties. Man as yet is very far from being a wholly reasonable being. Most minds are hide-bound with habit. They may accept formally the general doctrine of evolution but their own religious and social thinking is not evolutionary. It is still true that one generation builds tombs for the prophets whom their fathers stoned. No party of progress has ever carried all the people with it in its step forward, and those in the van always seem traitors to those in the rear. The pain of progress has lost none of its old sting.

Having discussed the nature and value of faith and the clash between those who wish to retain the objects of faith as received from the fathers and those who wish to reconstruct them, we may turn to the general problem of the relation between faith and knowledge. We are not concerned here with the old clash between theology and science, for we frankly assume that wherever the clash has been concerned with knowledge of facts and laws rather than interpretation, science has won all along the line. For the thorough-going modernist that old controversy is a thing of the past. Scientific questions, we now acknowledge, can be answered only by scientists, if they can be answered at all. Our interest now is only in the contention that the type of knowledge gained by science makes any affirmation or postulate based on faith illegitimate and untenable.

The contention put forth here will be that knowl-

edge is not intrinsically different from belief when they are considered psychologically. The main difference is as to the degree of certainty in each. To know is to have the completest assurance, to recognize that which is "known" as definitely and firmly fixed in our system of experience. So-called knowledge can generally refer to the objective grounds on which the subjective experience rests. Belief is not so able to do this: it does business on less paid-up capital. Still we must be careful to distinguish belief from the mere subjective play of the imagination. It is far more solid than that. In day-dreaming we give our fancy free play and follow the lead of our subjective desires; but in real belief, that is, belief that determines action, subjective needs and fancies are never the sole factor. We cannot *believe* anything that attracts our feelings. All real belief involves objective control of subjective activity, only this control is not as complete or as assured in belief as it is in knowledge. Belief, however shaky its foundations may seem in comparison with those of knowledge, is always the mental attitude of assent to an object believed to be real. If this were not the case, if our minds were normally incapable of distinguishing between hallucinations and real objects, our beliefs could not be taken seriously enough even to be discussed, leave alone to be acted on.

All our judgments whether practical or theoretical were at the beginning necessarily based on belief or postulation, conscious or unconscious. The human race started out on its life of exploration and inquiry by trusting its own faculties, taking for granted the reality of an external world and assuming that the mind could in one way or another come to know that world. Without these assumptions of common sense,

the free mental life of man could not have been begun. That free mental life no doubt at the beginning was concerned with the lower values. All its judgments were what we now call judgments of value. Man did not ask, What is this thing in itself? but, What does it mean for me? Man's interest in objects was determined, in the days when he lived so close to the edge of things, by their effects on himself. He was a pragmatist—in fact, if not in theory—as we all are when dire necessity is upon us. Good and bad as ideas preceded true and false. Values were more significant than so-called facts. But as life advanced and as man became more conscious of what he was doing, he gradually learned to distinguish between different types of judgment. He learned to speak of theory and practice, of knowledge and life, of intellectual and theoretical judgments on the one hand and of æsthetic, ethical and religious judgments on the other. Both types of judgment had value for him or he would not have continued to make them. Truth and fact were values as well as goodness and beauty. The human mind was motivated by its own interest in pursuing truth and fact as well as in pursuing beauty and goodness. But certain judgments, by reason of their long acceptance, of their serviceability over a wide range of life and of universal use by all sorts of men, came in time to lose all appearance of subjectivity. What had begun as postulates, hesitatingly put forward by the few, came to be regarded as axioms by the many. A body of accepted knowledge, especially in mathematics and ethics, gradually was organized over against more hypothetical and less easily verified judgments and those who possessed this knowledge and were adding to it came to regard it as the only kind of knowledge

worthy of the name. Facts were solid and dependable while values were merely imaginative and often illusory. Reason was the broad highway to truth; imagination was the "primrose path" to illusion and error.

But plausible as the distinction seems, after all it is logical rather than psychological. It is a distinction for convenience, not a primary differentiation. The two forms of judgment are different phases of a knowledge which embraces both. Our longest and strongest chains of inductive reasoning are based on postulates or assumptions. We must begin somewhere, and the place where we begin was not reached by reasoning. We simply find ourselves there and start from there without any questioning. As C. C. Everett used to say, the old woman who believed that the earth rested on a rock and that on another rock and that there were rocks all the way down was of the same mind as John Stuart Mill who said that faith in induction rests on induction and that there is induction all the way down. But the fundamental assumptions of the mind are not reached either by induction or deduction. The only proof of them is that we cannot get on in our thought without assuming them. Back of all our judgments is the mind itself, with instincts and senses and a synthetic, organizing and interpreting activity which we all receive ready-made from the hands of nature. How that mind came to be is as yet a matter for speculation rather than knowledge. But whatever its history, it is the source of all our sciences. We sometimes spell the word science with a capital S and then declare that Science affirms so and so, or Science denies so and so, and submit our mind's to Science's verdicts as though we were listening to the oracles of some demigod. But there is no such entity as Science. As Renouvier wittily

remarked: "I should like very much to meet this person I hear so much about, called Science." There is no such person. There are many sciences and each one consists of a body of observed facts and a system of judgments or generalizations concerning those facts, and behind the facts and the generalizations alike we must place a human mind or a succession of human minds. Whatever truth there is in our sciences is due to the living dialectic, the creative activity of the mind itself in its vital relations with the environing universe and other minds. The mind has an innate tendency to postulation and generalization which we are obliged to depend on and the basis of science is not pure infallible reasoning but trust in this innate tendency to postulation. As the young animal instinctively feels its way to its mother's breasts, so our minds by their own necessity seek order in the world. Science began by postulating order in defiance of the seeming chaos of experience and if it refused to postulate beyond experience now, it would cease to make any further movement. Science lives by faith, that is, by postulation as well as morals and religion.

The whole story of evolution might be construed as an illustration of faith, meaning by faith an aspiring and straining toward that which is not yet but may ultimately be brought to pass. The letter to the Hebrews defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; that is, faith is an intense subjective certainty which gives substance to things which do not yet exist for our perception. The mind can imagine things so vividly, desire them so ardently and then work for them so vigorously that, though their actuality is still in the future, they have all the reality, as operative factors in conduct,

that existent things have. Our very faith in the ideal is a powerful factor in bringing it into being. The very essence of faith is to live toward the future and the non-existent and to act as though what is believed to be possible were just as real a motive as hunger or thirst or love or any other present desire.

In some such sense as this the story of evolution resembles the story of faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing whither he went." So says the author of the letter to the Hebrews and James Ward, an apostle of modern liberal religion, speaks in a somewhat similar strain:

Every forward step in the past history of the organic world might be formulated as an act of faith not warranted by aught within the ken of the savant at that point. There was little, for example, in all that the wisest fish could know to justify the belief that there was more scope for existence on the earth than in the water and that persistent attempts to live on land would issue in the transformation of his swim bladder into lungs. And when as yet there was not a bird to cleave the air, there was surely little in all that the most daring of saurian speculators could surmise concerning that untrodden element to warrant any risk to his bones to satisfy his longing to soar, although when he did try, his fore-legs were changed to wings at length and his dim prevision of a bird became incarnate in himself.

Certainly it could be said of each new order of animal life: "It went out not knowing whither it went." The

forward movement of life is experimental, exploratory, venturesome. It feels its way along paths which as yet it has not explored to the end and in following them it runs the risk of finding itself in a blind alley. But risk is an inescapable element in progress. "Nothing venture, nothing win" seems to be the motto of nature, as well as of man. The evolutionary process is in no sense like the unwinding of thread from a spool or the straight path of a missile dropping from the air. It is more like the exploratory method of human science with its hypotheses and its slow testing of them in the fields of observation and experimentation.

"He went out not knowing whither he went." That certainly is the story of human life. Trekking into the unknown parts of the earth has been a large part of the human story for thousands of years. Seas, mountains, even frozen arctic zones only stop the movement for the moment. Man has gone on his fearless way over the land, under the water, and through the air. The perils to which many are known to have succumbed do not daunt the courage of those who feel the urge for exploration and glory. Man cannot rest even in a splendid past so long as bigger ventures are waiting just over the horizon. With Walt Whitman, the men of faith are ready to cry:

O something pernicious and dread!
Something far away from a puny and pious life!
Something unproved! Something in a trance!
Something escaped from the anchorage, and driving free!

The urge of the evolutionary movement is in the brain of man. If he knew what his fate in the world was to be, when he was to die, whether he was to be immortal or not; if by some miracle of insight the whole

mystery of the universe were made intelligible to him, the zest of life would be gone, for it would contain no more challenge to his courage and his faith. It is the call of the wild, the unknown, the risky that gives zest to his spirit and without zest the earth to him would soon become no better than a stupid lubberland. The timid, sluggish soul loves the cozy corners, but afoot and light-hearted the man of faith takes to the open road.

And the real faith of religion is far more akin to this venturesome spirit of the explorer and the pioneer than to the fixed rigid certainties of the creeds and confessions. The transformation of religious faith into theological dogma is one of the dark stupidities and tragedies of human history. "Faith," as W. Morgan says, "is trust in the rational, the beautiful and the good as the ultimate reality and might in the universe, the eternal yea of our soul to the highest that has met us in experience." That definition puts religious faith back again where it belongs—among the dauntless, prospecting, death-defying ventures of the spirit. It is like life's venturing out of the water on to the land, and from the land into the air. The reward for the first venture was the lungs of the land-animal and for the second the wings of the bird. And the reward of religious faith is the courage to commit oneself to a life-program that otherwise might seem too hazardous and difficult. The Hebrew Prophets, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, Wesley, Henry Martyn, all of them men of powerful religious faith, lacked that face to face knowledge of the object of their faith which we get in our human loves, friendships and loyalties, and yet their faith in God was as real and as determinative of their conduct as a soldier's trust in some

great General, such as Napoleon, Wellington, Grant or Lee. To quote James Ward again:

As the creatures that strained towards the light now have eyes to see, while those that cleaved to the primal slime remain full of darkness, may it not be that those among men who trust religious impulses will attain in the end an insight as superior to all the inferences based on sight as sight itself is to the gropings of the blind? . . . And may not the striving after God to which faith in Him leads, quicken this new consciousness into life and shew at length that it was from Him the impulse sprung?

To this kind of experimental, undogmatic faith science can have no rational or valid objection. Science itself, as we have seen, is not without its assumptions. Nothing outside the world of mathematics is capable of rigid logical demonstration. Our first premises are inevitably assumed. Many degrees of certainty accompany our various beliefs. We may be completely certain of a present perception or the memory of some of yesterday's events or that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles and we may demonstrate all these propositions to our neighbors. We may be equally certain that it is wrong to tell a lie or a duty to keep faith or that a true mother would sacrifice her life for her child in the hour of danger, but these beliefs are held on other grounds and cannot be demonstrated. And our religious beliefs are held on the second kind of ground rather than the first. They are born out of inner and subtle experiences, out of exalted states of mind which do not come to us often and to prosaic minds seldom if ever. If our

religious postulates contradicted science, that is, the organized systematized judgments which best represent the experience of mankind in its dealings with the physical universe, they could not be legitimately held; but if they do not contradict science, are not inconsistent with each other and at the same time tend to solve the contradictions of experience as well as add energy, vitality and optimism to our personality, they are perfectly legitimate from a cognitive or theoretical point of view.

CHAPTER XII

THE PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

It is difficult for even the convinced modernist to be completely candid and frank when he comes to deal with the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is not merely the official divine rank which the church has given to him that overawes the critical mind; it is also the wealth of sentiment that has gathered around his name among Christian people. The official rank and the sentiment together make most critics either hesitate to deal critically with the life and work of Jesus at all or claim for him more than the facts really warrant.

As an illustration of the former, take this line from Henry Osburn Taylor, a writer of great distinction: "The prudent mind halts before the mystery of Jesus Christ." Of course it does. But the prudent mind also halts before the mystery of human personality as a whole. We know not how the human spirit came to be; how it is related to the brain through which it manifests itself; how it becomes differentiated into musician, painter, poet, prophet, mathematician, scientist, inventor and administrator; how it became incarnate in the Greeks as a genius for art and science and among the Hebrews as a genius for righteousness and religion; how out of the same city, the same circle and sometimes the same family will come a great saint and a great sinner. And yet these unsolved problems do not prevent us from trying to probe the

mystery of humanity. To acknowledge mystery is wisdom; to stop before it is to block inquiry.

As an illustration of the second, we might quote at length from Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*¹ in which he contends that the humanitarian Jesus of the liberal theologians is as unhistorical as the theological Christ of orthodox Christianity but we will content ourselves with a quotation from the late President Burton of the University of Chicago:

Jesus was the first great exemplar of the scientific spirit as the most enlightened men of science understand and practice it today. He faced facts squarely, made them, rather than opinions, however ancient and honorable, the guide of his thinking and the basis of his action, set facts in relation to one another, penetrated beneath their surface to find their meaning, brought imagination into service and to all that mere induction or deduction could prove, added an estimate of values and a strong element of faith. Slowly the world is learning that this is the best way to think and all the progress of modern times is due to this method of thought.

It is undoubtedly true that Jesus was a man of keenest native intelligence and that he faced facts squarely, but the total impression of this passage—that Jesus was the first of the world's inductive thinkers—could not be substantiated by a critical investigation of the actual words of Jesus. It is due to the writer's desire to attract his scientific contemporaries to Jesus by giving to his message a look of modernity or to justify the application of scientific methods to the Bible by show-

¹ Macmillan.

ing that Jesus himself was an expert in the use of those methods.

No part of the modernist revolt against traditional interpretations of religion awakens more fear or hostility than its humanitarian view of Jesus. The religious thinking of the majority of Christians is so unhistorical and so unimaginative that they have persuaded themselves that everything beautiful, spiritual and inspiring in morals and religion derives wholly from Jesus. If it should be demonstrated that Jesus did not speak with infallible authority on the mysteries of life and death, of God and the soul, but shared some of the limitations of the excited apocalyptic minds of his own time and was himself a seeker after truth and life, they feel that the whole edifice of their faith would crumble as the bridge falls when the keystone is removed. But only a false historical perspective makes the position of Jesus in spiritual religion seem like the keystone in an arch. The roof of the temple of spiritual religion rests on many columns and of these Jesus, though the most important for the Western world, was only one.

It is perfectly plain, now, to the free, historical mind that Jesus did not create spiritual religion and that therefore no one conception of his person and work can be indispensable to the existence of a spiritual religion. Jesus no more created spiritual religion than Shakespeare created the English language. No other man has ever made as free, full and magnificent use of the English language as Shakespeare did, but for all his genius Shakespeare only worked with words, grammatical forms and ideas which had been slowly created by the genius of the whole English race. And so it is with Jesus and spiritual religion. No one else has ever

given such beautiful, intelligible and convincing expression to the great fundamental principles of spiritual religion as Jesus did, but those principles had already been discovered and more or less fully expressed by Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets and psalmists in Israel long before his time. Indeed many scholars go further and say that there is not an idea or sentiment in the Gospels that cannot be found in more or less complete form in the best portions of other sacred books.

The truth is that, as language is the product of generation after generation of the same people working together, consciously or unconsciously, to make their medium of communication more simple and useful and beautiful and adequate, so spiritual religion is the product of generation after generation of prophets, poets, mystics and moral reformers, working alone or in groups, to make their inherited religious ideas and sentiments conform to the highest ideals of their own souls. There are geniuses in the moral and religious life just as there are geniuses in the world of literature and art; but no one genius, however great, has created all the impulses that have made for the refinement of language or the spiritualization of religion. The tallest mountain slopes up gradually from the common ground and its foundations are the same as those of the smallest hill, namely, the solid crust of old mother earth; so the loftiest genius in religion has his foundations in the common religious impulses of human nature and is prepared for by the labors and intuitions of a multitude of forerunners, some of them known, but the great majority dead, buried and forgotten. The probability is that if Shakespeare had not lived, the English language would have been without some of

the freedom, imaginative sweep and poetic glow which it now has, but still there would have been an English language, capable of expressing lofty and noble ideas and sentiments; so if Jesus had not lived, the Western world would have lacked an element of ideality and aspiration which it now has, but it would not have been without a spiritual religion nor without noble, saintly, beautiful, aspiring souls. The whole spiritual fate of humanity is not bound up with what the scholars think or discover concerning one individual prophet. The value of Jesus to humanity, which is admittedly incalculable, is not that he is the only witness to the spiritual truth on which our higher welfare depends, but rather that his life, through its dramatic and climacteric close, brought on to the stage of the world and placed, as it were, before the footlights, those deep and noble but generally half-concealed truths of spiritual religion which are the common heritage of every prophet, but which the big, blustering, materialistic world fails to see or crushes under its heavy heel.

We need not hesitate, then, through any fear for the future of spiritual religion, to seek a new valuation of Jesus in the light of modern historical criticism of the New Testament. The problem of the person of Jesus was not settled for reason in the creeds of the fourth and fifth centuries—it was only settled for the central authorities of the Roman Catholic church. With the development of free thought and the spread of scientific and historical knowledge, the old problem has again awakened into life for multitudes of people. A restatement of what we ought to think and feel about Jesus has become a necessity for the thoughtful and inquiring portion of the religious public. The wide reading of Professor Case's book *Jesus: A New Biog-*

*raphy*² and the violent reactions it has produced in many quarters indicate that a new valuation of Jesus is being slowly and painfully but surely wrought out in the Christian world.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the best key to the personality and work of Jesus is that supplied by a study of the Hebrew prophets. Let us note this somewhat in detail.

For one thing the tone of authority with which Jesus spoke and which struck his listeners as a novelty in the religious life of their time—a time when tradition, textbook and comment took the place of the original utterances of the individual soul—is paralleled by the words of the ancient prophets. “Thus saith the Lord”—the phrase with which so many of the prophetic sermons begin—indicates to what source the prophets traced their intuitions and enthusiasms. On the strength of the thoughts and feelings that had come to him as he meditated while tending his sheep on the hillside, Amos went to the rich and idolatrous cities of Northern Israel and denounced them publicly for their idolatry, immorality and injustice. On the strength of a similar inspiration Jesus went to the city of Jerusalem from his village home in Galilee and denounced the Pharisees and Sadducees for worldliness and greed. Back of the preaching of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah, just as back of the teaching of Jesus, lay the conviction that they had had a unique experience, that God had laid a special mandate on their souls and that it was incumbent on them to declare the truths that had been given to them. To the ordinary Western mind, which is only too often a mere purveyor for the senses, this prophetic feeling of

² The University of Chicago Press, 1927.

uniqueness of inspiration may seem a miracle, but if it is a miracle in the case of Jesus, it is just as truly a miracle in the case of Amos or Isaiah.

In addition to this the manner of their preaching was the same. Their sermons were delivered anywhere and everywhere, on the streets, in private gatherings, on the hillside but always extemporaneously and to informal audiences. Their sense of the urgency of their message was so great that they seized upon every occasion offered by the gatherings of the people to pour forth their thought in popular, figurative and energetic speech. From the burning lips of Jesus as from those of Amos and Isaiah came exhortations, warnings, bold denunciations. They all alike made effective use of the imagery of popular speech—the vine, the shepherd, the light, the way, the relationships of simple human life. They all knew how to awaken the interest of the crowd by parable, startling paradox and sharp epigram.

In the range of their subjects, too, the same close kinship is apparent. Jesus has the same scorn for mere ceremonial cleanliness which Amos shows in his fourth chapter and Isaiah in his first chapter. The main theme of his preaching as of theirs is the coming of the Kingdom of God or of social righteousness, the moral character of the service God requires of His people, the necessity for justice, mercy and charity in all human relationships and the obligations of being and doing rather than of outwardly professing. It cannot be doubted that the teaching of Jesus attained a completeness and fullness of thought and a richness of expression to which the prophets never attained but we find in the authentic sayings of Jesus little if anything which was not hinted at in the fragmentary mes-

sages of the Prophets. Even his teaching as to the fatherhood of God, which some have considered entirely original, had already found expression in the nobly spiritual messages of Hosea and Jeremiah. The idea of God as the father, not of the race but of the individual—an idea showing great progress in religious thought and one for which Jesus generally gets sole credit—was already divined by Malachi. A scholar of our times is quite within the facts when he says that "Jesus turned his back upon the traditionalism of the letter which characterized the Judaism of his time, went back to the great books of the Old Testament, sifted out and unified the best spiritual and ethical teachings of the prophets, and gave them back in living forms to the Jewish people of his age and since then to humanity as a whole." His originality consisted, not in bringing down from heaven or up out of his own supernatural consciousness, conceptions of God and man of which no one before him had ever caught a glimpse, but in piercing through the chaotic mass of traditions and beliefs which constituted the religion of his age, seizing upon the central things in prophetism and giving them such a living embodiment in speech and life as to make them a possession for the imagination and soul of the race forever.

It may be confidently affirmed, therefore, that Jesus was a Hebrew prophet in the nature of his inspiration, in the manner of his preaching and in the substance of his message. For the modern world there is no special problem of the person of Jesus. That ancient puzzle, which was due to the effort of the Christian church to blend two disparate strains of religion and philosophy and to the explanation of which so much theological effort has been devoted, has been taken up into the

broader problem of the nature of religious inspiration, and that is not a problem for history or dogmatics but for the psychology of the religious consciousness in the race and in the individual.

The main quarrel of modern historical criticism with the creedal interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ is that it has made him unreal, lifted him completely out of the social setting in which alone he can be in any modern sense understood, changed men's interest in him from one of an essentially ethical and spiritual character into one of a predominantly theological character and so transformed Christianity that, from being a simple worship of God and service of man, it became an elaborate ritualistic adoration of the rank of Jesus as Divine Head of the Church and source of the whole ecclesiastical system which bears his name. The psychological and historical steps by which this transformation was brought about are now pretty thoroughly known, thanks to the immense labors of an army of European and American scholars. It will be a long time before the world-wide effects of this transformation will be overcome and Christianity be brought again into its own natural line of evolution, but at least the change has well begun. Our task here, however, is not to retell the story of the evolution of the dogma of the deity of Christ. It is rather that of characterizing the person and work of Jesus for those who acknowledge unhesitatingly his complete humanity.

We have classed him among the prophets and it is certainly in that group that spirits most akin to him are to be found. But it may well be that certain qualities of his spirit and his work will be more completely brought out if we consider him in other associations.

It has been customary to speak of Jesus as a great teacher. Professor A. B. Bruce, of a former generation of scholars, wrote a book called *The Training of the Twelve* in which he represents Jesus as carrying on an elaborate preparation of his disciples for their work as apostles after his death. Such a description of the relation of Jesus with his disciples could hardly be accepted to-day. Teaching suggests school and school suggests organization and a definite body of instruction but the influence of Jesus over the minds of his followers was of a quite different character. He stood over against the Pharisees who were the schoolmen of his place and time and over against his greatest disciple Paul, as one who had been untouched by the schools. Indeed it was complained of him that he spoke with an authority to which he had no right because he had not studied in the schools as the Scribes and Pharisees had. He attended the synagogue and knew the Hebrew Scriptures but apart from that modicum of instruction we might say of him as Wordsworth says of one of his characters:

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie
 His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
 The silence that is in the starry sky
 The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

Nor could we characterize the intellectual relations of Jesus with his disciples as similar to those of Socrates with his friends. In both cases the relations were informal and friendly but there the resemblance stops. There is no dialectic in the Gospels. Jesus did not buttonhole men in the Socratic manner in order to clear up their ideas on virtue or to show up the hollowness

of their intellectual pretensions. On a few occasions he answered the quibbling questions of the Pharisees in a manner that might recall Socrates, but ordinarily he did not debate or argue or expound. He was a revealer rather than an expositor or a teacher. He did not cite authorities as the Scribes and Pharisees did, but spoke with the authority of complete subjective certainty and expected that his words would awaken assured a conviction within the minds of his hearers. That Jesus was a man of great intellectual genius cannot be doubted by anyone who knows how difficult it is to achieve such intuitive insight and such adequate expression as he achieved, but his genius was not of the discursive, ratiocinative kind. He knew what was in men, as Shakespeare did or as Burns did, by a psychological insight which cannot be analyzed. He was not a conscious wrestler with the knotty problems of logic and ethics as Socrates was but a prophet, a forth-teller, an inspired speaker, a fountain of spiritual suggestion, a quickener of men's lives far more than a director of their reflective thinking.

Jesus is sometimes spoken of as a poet and certainly he has both the poet's vision and the poet's phrases. It is impossible, no doubt, to be quite sure how much tradition and the writers of the Gospels added to the parables and discourses which Jesus himself spoke and whether the additions improved them or weakened them. But the probability is that as spoken they were even more effective than as we now have them. The voice, the look, the gesture, the bearing of the speaker himself who spoke "as never man spake" must have added greatly to the bare word however adequate that may have been. But taking his discourses and parables as we have them, there can be no doubt as to their

poetic quality. His view of human life, of man's relations to his fellows and of God was so rich in sentiment and so warm with feeling that nothing but poetic speech could have conveyed it to his hearers. He had an eye also for the beauties of nature and responded to its multiform sights as only people can who habitually live out of doors. Nevertheless he was not a poet in any professional or literary sense of the term. We cannot think of him as deliberately coining and polishing phrases, lines, stanzas and whole poems as a poet does. It is hard to escape the feeling that great as is the writer or speaker of the word, the doer of the deed is greater after all than he. On the whole the main business of the writer of the word has been to report the deeds of the doer and Jesus was not a poet in this sense at all. He belonged rather among the doers of the deed. He was the founder of a great world-religion or at least out of his life and activity a great world-religion issued. He was a speaker of the word rather than a writer of it, but even then he was not a professional orator either. He used words as great poets and orators use them but for all that we seem to be compelled to think of him primarily as a doer of the deed, rather than as a master of the word. Jesus was as much greater than his own wonderful words as Lincoln was greater than his.

If we are not to think of Jesus primarily either as a teacher or an orator or a literary man, how must we characterize him? If we answer that he was a great creative moral and spiritual personality, it may be said that we are simply taking refuge in words to which no precise, scientific meaning can be given. In a sense that is true. General J. C. Smuts³ is quite correct when

³ *Holism and Evolution.*

he says that there is as yet no science of personality and that there is a very rich field for a new science,—for which he suggests the name of personology. Certainly the science of psychology as now taught is inadequate to the task. But though we have no science of personology, every cultivated person has some idea of what is meant by a great creative moral and religious personality. The total personality of any man is greater than the total expression he has been able to make of it. No one ever *is* all that he has it in him to be. A loving, warm, stimulating, powerful, many-sided, richly gifted personality is the greatest achievement of evolution thus far. Books are great, art is great, government is great but greater than all else human is the personality whence these great things issue. A great life is the earth's rarest flower.

That Jesus was just such a personality is being recognized more and more widely. It used to be thought that, when he was interpreted in strictly human terms, his nature was being rigidly limited. A mere man was thought to be a rather impoverished and unpromising creature. But human nature is now recognized to be a growing thing, wide open in the direction in which evolution is moving. No one man, not even Jesus, has ever exemplified all its possibilities. It sends out branches, as it were, in all directions and comes to fruition now in a great poet, now in a dramatist, now in a musician, now in a scientist, now in a philosopher, now in an administrator, and now in a moral and religious genius. Jesus is the supreme exemplar of this latter type. He embodies in his life and personality the Will to Righteousness as no one else has ever done. Where moral philosophers for the most part only discuss ethical theory and sometimes weaken the moral

energy of those who follow their discussions, the life of Jesus so completely illustrated his own teachings that throughout the centuries his personality has been the most stimulating moral influence that has acted upon the higher life of Europe and America.

The full power of the influence of the creative moral personality of Jesus upon Western life has not always been exerted for several reasons. For one thing, the absorption of the church's mind in the interminable theological controversies concerning the union in Jesus Christ of two persons, the human and the divine, has called attention away from his supreme value as a living example of the will to righteousness. Even at the present time the majority of Christian people are more interested in his rank as the Second Person in the Trinity or the Supreme Head of the Church or in his place as Divine Mediator in the so-called Plan of Salvation than in his moral personality, and so long as this attitude is maintained, the full power of his moral influence cannot be exerted. But even when this controversy has been pushed somewhat into the background and men have paid some attention to the human Jesus, they have failed to see him, as modern scholarship shows him to us now, by assuming to begin with that his sinlessness must be preserved at all costs and by describing him as "gentle Jesus, meek and mild." It was a theological rather than a moral motive that made men insist on the sinlessness of Jesus. Theology demanded that Jesus should offer to God a flawless sacrifice to atone for man's sins, but moral reverence does not demand that moral heroes shall be faultless. The doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ has done injury to his moral personality by suggesting that his claim to our reverence is based on a merely negative

virtue—that he did no harm. But mere harmlessness is not the real basis of moral heroism. Although we have no desire to prove that Jesus ever committed sin, it is quite impossible to prove the opposite and we call attention away from the significant fact of his moral life by talking about his sinlessness at all. For the significant fact is that the righteousness of Jesus was positive, creative, fearless and aggressive. The “gentle Jesus, meek and mild” of the well-known portraits and the popular hymns could never have carried the war into his enemies’ country, faced the possibility of death at the hands of those enemies or stirred up enough hostility to bring about his death. Jesus was no doubt “the embodiment of creative love” but the love was of a kind that could clearly visualize and measure the evil forces of the world and then hurl itself against them. The name which Canon Streeter gives to Jesus—a Constructive Revolutionary—is far more historical and far more morally inspiring than the old epithets which stressed his submissiveness, his meekness and his mildness.

The event in the career of Jesus which has loomed largest in theology and in the services and thought of the church is undoubtedly his death. The shelves of theological libraries are filled with an immense literature whose motive has been to interpret the meaning of the cross of Jesus for the life of man. All sorts of theories of the atonement have been the outcome of this age-long reflection and men have been convicted of heresy simply because their theory of the atonement differed somewhat from the prevailing one. But for the modernist all these theories are as dead as the pre-Copernican theories of astronomy are for the modern scientist. Nevertheless, it is fully recognized that some

sort of interpretation of the meaning of the Cross is incumbent on anyone who writes on religion to-day and the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to this topic.

In the first place, modern thought affirms that the life of Jesus was more important than his death. His death no doubt supplied a most dramatic climax to his life, but the contents of the life itself and of his teachings form his real contribution to the world. The death of Jesus is by no means as unique as it has been thought. Many men and women have died quite as painfully and bravely as Jesus died. The annals of martyrdom are full of the stories of both men and women who endured limitless sufferings for the sake of the causes they advocated. All such martyrdoms have their value as revelations of the heights to which a deep moral passion can lift a human soul. They rebuke the luxurious, self-indulgent tendencies of the average unspiritual life.

But the fact that a man is willing to die for his idea does not show it to be true. The Jesuit missionaries, as we have said already, risked their lives gladly in their efforts to put a drop of water on the brow of a dying Indian, believing that they would thereby save his soul, but their self-sacrificing courage did not prove that a drop of water had such spiritual value as they attributed to it. A man's willingness to die for his belief shows his courage and the power of his belief over him, but it does not prove the worth for all men and for all time of the belief he dies for. Martyrdom, even when inspired by fanaticism, has its lesson for a self-indulgent race, but to be of the highest value it must be inspired by a truth based on the eternal foundations. We must ask not merely, "Is the individual

ready to die for his faith?" but also, "Is his faith worth to humanity the sacrifices he makes for it?"

Now it is just because of the worth to humanity of the faith for which Jesus died that his death becomes significant. He was not the only Jew of his time who was willing to sacrifice himself, but the hundreds of other Jewish martyrs were inspired by a fanaticism which has had no value for humanity. The courage and calmness which Jesus displayed in his last hours may not be common in the annals of martyrdom, but they are far from being unique. What makes his death stand out from other martyrdoms is the uniqueness of the personality and convictions of Jesus himself. Jesus was a pioneer preacher of ideas which have proved their worth to humanity for eighteen hundred years. He dropped into the minds of men seeds or suggestions of truth that, though small in the beginning, are gradually growing into great sheltering trees. The parable of the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, the Pharisee and Publican, the judgment day and the rich fool; the short, pithy epigrams scattered through the Gospels; the simple, democratic, spontaneous relations that existed between Jesus and his disciples, prefiguring much that was to follow in later ages; the example of a life wholly devoted to the unselfish service of others—it is these actual contents of the teaching and life of Jesus that give him his unique significance in the world. His death set the seal upon his life and gave a last splendid exhibition of the qualities that had distinguished him before; but apart from the worth to the world of the life ideals he advocated, the religious affirmations he made, the wonderful personality he achieved, the martyrdom of Christ would not separate him widely from other martyrs. The real value of the cross of Christ,

as of all martyrdoms, lies in the fact that it focuses the attention of humanity on a personality and a way of life that otherwise might have been overlooked or forgotten. Jesus sowing the seeds of new ideas and new spiritual impulses in the minds and hearts of men is to the majority perhaps a far less impressive figure than Jesus dying on the cross. But to the same majority the silent growth-processes of nature are much less impressive than the devastations of earthquakes and storms. As it has been left to a modern poet to see the divine in *Leaves of Grass*, so it has been only the few in all ages who have been profoundly impressed by the picture of Jesus the sower. It is historically true that the cross has concealed Jesus from the world rather than revealed him. Through the emphasis of the theologian on it and through the church's use of it in her services, the cross has loomed so large that the Christian world as a whole has failed to be impressed by the actual contents of the life, teaching and personality of the hero-prophet who was crucified thereon.

In the second place, the cross of Christ is not so much a sacrifice for sin as a revelation of sin. It is easy to show that the New Testament in many passages interprets Christ's death as a sacrifice, but it does not follow that we must regard it in that way now. Certainly the note in Paul's letters when he is speaking of this matter is different from the main note in the teachings of Jesus. One passage, ascribed to Jesus, does speak of his death as a ransom, but it may not have been spoken by him but put into his mouth by his reporters. Certainly such an idea is not in line with his general teaching. The parables of Jesus again and again recall the line in the fifty-first Psalm to the effect that the sacrifices desired by God are a broken spirit

and a contrite heart, and not the blood of lambs or the life of a divine victim. The thought of Jesus moves throughout on the high plain of the fiftieth and fifty-first Psalms and the great ethical sayings of the prophets. He never represents God as angry or demanding a victim to satisfy His sense of justice. He thinks of God rather as the head of a family, dealing with his children in a human way, than as an offended potentate demanding a tribute of blood before he will be placated. Paul's doctrine of the cross is not a step in advance of Jesus or the prophets, but a step backward. It is an attempt to interpret the significance of Jesus in the terms of a system of thought which the prophets and Jesus repudiated. It is simply one of the historical accidents which befall every great teacher—the failure of a succeeding generation to be true to his central ideas.

What modern thought sees, then, in the death of Christ is not a sacrifice to God for sin, but a revelation to man himself of his own blindness, stupidity and cruelty. If one wishes to see how hideous men seem when enraged by religious fanaticism, let him look at the priests and scribes as they gather around the cross of Jesus. If one wishes to see how crass and cruel and stupid ordinary men may be when they have to do with a rare, beautiful, idealistic poet-soul, let him contemplate the brutal treatment which the soldiers meted out to Jesus on his way to the cross of Calvary. If one wishes to see how incapable worldly or cynical men are of appreciating a hero of the moral and spiritual life, let him meditate on the failure of Pilate and Herod to understand Jesus. If one wishes to see to what extent the conservative forces of society can go when they are confronted with the spirit of reform,

let him study the way in which the secular and the religious powers united to crush Jesus as soon as his mission became popular. Nowhere are the brutal, stupid, cruel elements in human nature better revealed than around the cross of Christ, and every fresh look at that cross ought to make men hate the more the qualities in their common human nature that made the cross possible.

In the last place, the cross of Christ is a revelation of the cost of progress. It is quite impossible for any individual to get a hearing for radically new views of God and life and social conduct without arousing against himself the masses of conservative people. And it is just as impossible for society to make any progress unless the gifted and far-seeing few are willing to suffer in the interests of their new truth or ideal. If there is anything divine in human nature it is the capacity of men to be so inspired by a life-ideal and so convinced of its value to humanity that neither self-interest nor the fear of men can hold them back from giving expression to it. The sublimest things in history are the voluntary sufferings of the devoted few, whether patriots or prophets or reformers or investigators. Without them the world would not only make no progress but would soon perish from its own self-indulgence.

When has it been different from what Jesus found it? Think of the labors, the anxieties, the alternate hopes and despairs, the seemingly wasted efforts that every advance movement has cost a few men and women! Every good thing has to agonize its way into human life. A new invention, a new social or economic program, a new form of poetry, a new world-view has to prove its worth and vitality by its endur-

ance of scorn, criticism, rage and hate. The cross of Christ is no isolated thing in history. It is but a shining example of the uncounted crosses on which nameless martyrs are stretched every day of the year. Wherever anyone sinks his merely individual self in the deliberate pursuit of a larger social good, wherever one pursues the thorny path of the reformer or the religious prophet, his spirit is the spirit of the lonely but brave man who hung on Calvary. The salvation of humanity was not wrought out by one man's sacrifice. All history proves that the salvation of mankind is being gradually wrought out by the sacrifices of the good, the brave and the far-seeing of all ages. The few are forever bearing the burden of human progress, standing in the forefront of the battle against sin, sacrificing the friendships, comforts and luxuries of the average successful life in the solitary pursuit of some ideal, feeling for the first time the revolutionary disturbance of new truth, laying down their lives to gain a hearing for their convictions. And if one wishes to give a religious or cosmic aspect to this principle of self-sacrifice, he may say that nothing can be more pleasing to God or can better atone for the general shortcomings of human nature than the heroic sacrifices of the great martyrs, of whom Jesus is the chief.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MEANING OF GOD IN MODERN THOUGHT

It is the misfortune of our age in the field of religion that, instead of being free to concentrate on the moral and spiritual awakening of the people, we should be obliged to spend so much of our strength in testing the truth of the religious ideas that have come down to us from the past. Nevertheless, the task of criticism cannot be evaded. Man's doctrinal interpretation of his religious experiences must be made in terms of the general thought of his time, and when general thought shifts, religious doctrine must follow suit. The more advanced branches of the Protestant church have already passed through the fiery ordeal of the higher criticism of the Bible. Some of them, by an even more painful critical effort, have revised their conception of the person of Jesus Christ. The first rude shock of these movements of thought has been lived through. As a result, we have discovered that our spiritual values are not dependent on our belief in the infallibility of the Bible nor on our uncritical acceptance of the traditional dogma of the deity of Jesus.

But an even more significant movement of thought is now upon us. The greatest symbol of our religious life, the mighty complex of sentiments, convictions, aspirations, hopes, ideas, etc., which is embodied in our word "God" is being critically analyzed to-day by more

people than ever before. In the past, such criticism was carried on by a few skeptics outside the churches; now it is entrenching itself both in the pulpit and the pew. As Whitehead says: "Today there is but one religious dogma in debate. What do you mean by 'God'? This is the fundamental religious dogma." The task of the older evangelical churches was to inspire in the souls of individuals a warm, intimate, personal relationship with a God who was already believed in and adequately symbolized for their thought by the doctrines of the church. Our immediate task is quite different. We must justify or reinterpret or completely reconstruct a traditional symbol whose meaning has faded out or become doubtful in the light of the new universe which science has revealed to us. In the case of many reflective persons, a painful uncertainty and sometimes a paralyzing doubt has for the moment seized upon the very living center of the soul, its will-to-believe. Before the immense cosmic forces of which science has made us aware and the immense tragedies and uncertainties of human life which the Great War revealed, the human spirit, so to speak, runs to cover. It protects itself from the frustrations of thought in agnosticism or it hides itself in the occult as the ostrich hides itself in the sand or it lulls itself into a semi-hypnotic state of indifference to the actual by mystical exercises, or it loses itself in self-pity that it should have seen the light in a transition age between two worlds, "one dead, the other not yet ready to be born."

But such a retreat of the human spirit before the perplexities which its own advancing knowledge has created cannot be persisted in for long. Reality is not less but more real because of the immensities, complexities and depths which knowledge has discovered in

it. Nor is our human need of making ourselves feel at home in its presence by symbolizing its fundamental nature and meaning any the less imperative to-day than in the past. To use the language of John Dewey, a consoling and supporting consciousness of the enduring and comprehending whole to which we belong is the ultimate need of life, and this consciousness demands adequate symbols. It is quite true that the creation of significant new symbols is the task of many men and even of many generations of men, but every individual thinker must make what little contribution he can, and each new generation must do its best to master its total environment in thought and feeling and embody such thought and feeling in symbolic forms.

In our search for the meaning of God in present human experience, we cannot fall back as our fathers did on *divine revelation*. Orthodox theologians have always felt that when they had reached the indisputable meanings of Biblical passages, they could rely on them as revealed truths. But such a naïve use of the Bible is no longer possible. We doubtless have psychological warrant for believing that the great spiritual heroes of the Bible were in psychic contact with phases of reality that do not lie open to the merely sensuous or rationalistic types of consciousness, but we have no adequate reason for believing that their experiences always validated the doctrines that have been founded on them. Hence the modern theologian, in his effort to formulate even tentatively what we call his idea of God, cannot be satisfied simply to give an orderly exposition of the ideas contained in the great spiritual passages of the Bible. We may say that unique spiritual experience is the theologian's starting-point, but he must fetch a wide circle of thought before he

can adopt as his own judgment the statement of the religious experient that in such and such an experience he met the absolute and transcendent God face to face.

Again, in our quest for the meaning of God, we cannot assume, as Calvinistic and Catholic theologians have always done, the existence of God apart from and prior to the reality which is given us in our total human experience. These theologians still believe that God existed in all his perfection and blessedness *before* the creation of the world; that the world was the deliberate product of His will and choice and was not involved in His own nature; that while the world reveals God's handicraft as a building reveals the handicraft of its architect, nevertheless God would have been God without the world just as the existence of the architect does not depend on his building. But under the impact of scientific thought this old doctrine has crumbled. No simile can make intelligible to us the creation of matter out of nothing. Creation is not an event in some definite time, for time is a constituent of the very substance of reality. The universe, using that term in its most inclusive sense, is not an effect of something outside itself. The totality of things is self-existing, self-moving, self-sustaining. Our human experience of reality is always becoming more penetrating and more inclusive, but we never get one step nearer to a vision of reality from some point of view outside of it or outside our experience of it.

The theologian's task, therefore, is not to do the impossible, that is, not to go back to beginnings or forward to endings, not to struggle to lift himself out of experience by pulling, as it were, on his own boot-straps or to insist that supernatural revelation has actually given him a point of view outside of experience.

Rather, recognizing that all his interpreting of experience goes on within experience and by means of conceptions which experience alone has gradually evolved, it is his task to lay hold, if at all possible, upon the structure of experienced reality, to stress its most significant features, to catch it in its great passages or transitions, to find, so far as human beings can, a sufficient reason why cosmic and human events occur as they do occur. Why a self-subsisting, self-sustaining reality should *be* rather than *not be* is not a question that he can wrestle with at all. It certainly is not a question for religion. God for religion has always meant that phase or those phases of experienced reality which seemed to have most bearing on actual human values. The theologian has been much concerned for God's infinity, but the religious worshiper has been content if he could feel that his God was real and significant and divine. Religion might be defined just as man's sense of a divine element in the world. This divine element takes many forms: now it is the starry heavens above; again it is the moral law within; yet again it is a gracious presence which awakens the deepest affections; but always it is, as Samuel Alexander says, "The awareness of a mysterious something which enforces or pleads for recognition."

If this conception of religion be valid, the mind's quest for God is not primarily a search for answers to speculative questions as to the origin of the world or as to the relation of mind to matter, or as to the reality or ideality of time and space, etc., but for an answer to the practical question as to what we find in experienced reality that we may frankly regard as divine, meaning by divine, wonderful, holy, sacred, appealing, worthful, commanding, ideal, forward-looking. As Hoernlé says:

"To doubt God's existence is, at bottom, nothing but to doubt whether the universe, in its real nature, is such as to justify the religious attitude towards it; whether it deserves to be worshiped." Or as Soderblom puts it: "That man is religious to whom something is holy." Our *first* task, then, in our quest for the meaning of God in human experience, is to discover that which is significant, structural and controlling in the mysterious reality whose children we are and with which each one of us has his own peculiar contacts, physical and psychical.

We are all familiar with the traditional conception of God as the preserver of the world or as an omnipotent Providence watching over and taking care of His own. In its old pictorial anthropomorphic form, critical people can no longer hold it, and yet I find growing up in my mind a conception which gives me the same sense of security and confidence which childlike minds have always derived from the old belief—I mean the conception of the self-sustaining order of the universe.

The notion of chaos has always been a painful one to the religious consciousness. Man's spirit can no more feel at home in a world where chaos is liable to break out at any time than his body can feel at home in a bog that may sink at any moment under his feet. When the Copernican astronomy demonstrated that the earth moved, men felt that, if the earth actually moved, it must plunge to its ruin sooner or later in the unknown depths of space. But they soon discovered that because the earth moves, it does not follow that it is plunging through space in a purely chance and haphazard way. No, the earth is as still as if it were standing still, although it is subject at every moment to three movements,—its movement on its own axis, its

movement around the sun, and its movement through space with the solar system. Often when our own spirits are in a state of chaos, it would not surprise us much if the world fell in ruins at our feet. But it never does. Once our own inner chaos has cleared up, we find that the order of the universe has sustained itself through all our turmoil. Wherever we touch the physical universe, we find order and form. The astronomer has found no place in the infinite spaces where the law of gravitation is not operative. Even when the physicist breaks up the atom into protons and electrons, he finds a wonderful order prevailing. Nothing seems to be out of relation to other things, and the way in which each thing relates itself to other things is not left to chance, but is written in its very constitution and in the constitution of the various things with which it spontaneously unites. Modern physicists tell us that the physical universe presents the spectacle of a force running down. Energy always flows downward from a higher to a lower potential, that is, toward a level of dispersed or dissipated motion. We actually witness this descending phase in the breaking down of radioactive elements. But they also tell us that there must be a running-up process or a creative activity at work, or the universe would have run down long ago. How this ascending process takes place we can only speculate. But whatever be its nature or the method of its working, some creative agency must be at work, or the radioactive elements would not now exist. In the cosmos as a whole the ascending and descending phases seem to be compensatory. In spite of the apparent waste of energy by its dispersion throughout space from every incandescent body, the efficiency of the universe is sustained.

Even in the moral world, where such tragic waste seems to prevail because of the power of evil, the evil itself is plainly self-destructive. It cannot sustain itself except in a society where a relatively stable order exists. It cannot ultimately prevail, because the more it prevails, the more it destroys itself. The very existence of humanity on the earth to-day shows that in the long run the moral order progressively prevails.

Now it may seem like extracting sunbeams from cucumbers to find religious value in this sustaining order of the universe, and yet for some at least it has that value. Their imagination does not demand that they shall conceive this order as due to some agency outside the reality where they experience it. They are content to affirm that in the thought of the sustaining order of the universe, they experience a deep and abiding sense of security and confidence. That order is a dynamic equilibrium; all sorts of changes go on in it; apparent losses take place—at least, downward tendencies are at work—but nothing ever escapes from the control of the cosmic field. Man's life is a part of this moving equilibrium. He shares in its downward movement in his restlessness and his unbelief; but deeper down in his mind he finds peace and hope and constructive affirmation whenever he realizes that he is the child of an infinite reality that sustains its order and efficiency through all its changes and dispersions.

The religious consciousness, as I have just affirmed, craves the sense of security which the idea of a self-sustaining order brings, but it wants more than security. It wants freedom, self-realization, the feeling of getting forward, the sense of progress. The great words put into the mouth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: "I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have

it more abundantly," give the watchword of the vital spirits of all ages. They are not satisfied to repeat the phrase, "safety first." They desire order, but they do not want an order so fixed and mechanical and sure that all movement and life are eliminated as well as all risks. Their God must be an inexhaustible dynamic principle as well as an unfailing principle of conservation. Without faith in the dynamic and plastic nature of reality and the human spirit, human life would soon degenerate into a selfish scheme of mere self-preservation.

Now, if we are to mean by God that which is wonderful, appealing, worthful, commanding, forward-looking, too great for any of our thought-categories to embrace and yet the most real of all our experienced realities, what phase of reality could be more Godlike or divine than life? Life is as real to us as anything can be, and yet we do not know its origin or its nature or its goal. It seems that we cannot identify it either with matter or energy. It does not interfere with the nature or normal functioning of the atoms or molecules in the living body. Its presence adds nothing to and its absence takes nothing from the physical and chemical qualities of the material constituents of the organism. When it is present the organism functions in an anabolic way; when it is absent, there appears the katabolic tendency characteristic of all inorganic changes. And yet though we can say little about life in a scientific way beyond describing the mechanisms through which it functions, what could be more real or more significant than the organisms which are the outcome of its activity? If it is not energy, it guides and controls energy to a higher potential. It takes inorganic matter and raises it into plants whose color, grace of form,

fragrance and ingenuity of organization are the wonder and delight of the human spirit. It takes the energy contained in organic matter and transforms it into mother's love and philosopher's wisdom and prophet's vision and mathematician's thought and poet's fine frenzy and mystic's ineffable rapture. It pours forth out of its inexhaustible creativity myriads of divergent, insurgent, dynamic forms on this earth at least, and probably throughout the universe, wherever the conditions are adequate for its manifestation. The story of life is the record of a struggle upward, of dynamic agencies resisting the downward, dragging tendencies, of experimentation and enterprise, of profiting by experience and gaining new goals. It is a creative process which is getting ready at every stage the conditions which will be requisite for the realization of the next stage—a process, too, in which every new grade of living creature becomes in its own right, increasingly active. It is a dynamic activity which neither slumbers nor sleeps, which functions not in a succession of states, but in unbroken continuity, and which so resists all our efforts to break it up and recombine it for conceptual purposes that it cannot be comprehended under any of our precise and manageable conceptions.

In the mind's quest for that which is significant, structural and forward-looking in experienced reality, the dynamic activity which is the ground and source of all existing living forms must be regarded as affording us a glimpse into the very interior structure of Being. Life, as a factor in reality, has made an immense appeal to many of our greatest modern thinkers, under the brilliant leadership of Bergson; and, though it may have been overstressed by some of them, the light it

throws on the nature of reality gives the death-blow to all the old materialisms and mechanisms.

Space permits me to take only one further step. In the words of L. L. Hobhouse, "God is that of which the highest known embodiment is the distinctive spirit of man." Creative evolution, after long experimentation in the lower forms of life, succeeds in creating a being who more or less learns to read her secrets and to become a creator on his own account. That creative being is man.

Readers of Whitehead's recent book on *Religion in the Making* will recall his definition of God as "the principle of concretion." This means that God is that order of the universe by virtue of which all being has some share in the existence of every particular thing, be it stone or flower or tree or man or nation. Everything in its own way shares in the being of all things, but certain things bring all reality to a focus more richly and concretely than others.

In the infinite depths of the universe it may be that other creatures bring reality to a richer focus than man; but for us, at least, on our present level of experience and knowledge, the divinest thing known is our own humanity at its best. To the cry of the bewildered Job: "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat," the best answer is the celebrated saying of St. Chrysostom: "The true Shekinah of God is man." Our humanist friends are only repeating the truth of this great saying when they declare that the great world-spirit finds its highest expression in humanity, and that in humanity we must look for the deepest manifestation of the divine.

But not everything in humanity is divine. A good

deal of human nature is just animal nature made more efficient in the struggle for existence by the possession of intelligence. It is human nature pursuing its highest values—truth, goodness and beauty—that throws a new light on the nature of the dynamic reality that is unfolding itself in the life-process. It is man the disinterested thinker, man the great creative artist, man the martyr and passionate pursuer of the moral ideal, man the mystic, thrilled to the very center of his being by his vision of and his union with the real, that impels us to speak of the divinity of man and to say that “the true Shekinah of God is man.” When we touch that which is distinctively human in human nature, we are in the presence of the divine.

Strange to say, the Christian theologian has generally been content to make a very limited use of this great truth. He has never failed to emphasize the divinity of the nature and life of Jesus Christ, but he has tied up his recognition of the spiritual greatness of Jesus to a theological dogma which has robbed Jesus of his real humanity. Hence, instead of regarding Jesus as the first among many brethren and thus doing justice to the original spiritual element in all noble men, he has made the many brethren too utterly dependent on the one great brother. By so doing he has impoverished the sentiment which the Christian world might otherwise have cherished for the divine element in human nature. If any one great spirit must be chosen as the supreme embodiment of the divine, upon Jesus of Nazareth our choice must fall. But the presence of a divine element in the universe is far more securely established if we find it manifested in a multitude of noble spirits of all ages and races than if we see it only in one miraculous, transcendent spirit.

Moreover, the theologian has limited our spiritual horizon by looking for the divinity of man only in the great religious hero. But religion, though the most important element, is after all only one element in what is distinctively human in human nature. The great disinterested thinkers of the race with their undying passion for knowledge, their patience in investigation, their infinite resourcefulness in inventing physical and mental instruments for the prosecution of their task, their marvelous ingenuity in constructing systems of thought in order to expound the meaning of their discoveries, are in their own way just as valid manifestations of the divine as the saints and mystics. Nor must the great creative artists be overlooked. These men and women of plastic imagination who have taken wood and stone and colors and words and sounds and so combined them as to produce cathedrals and sculptures and paintings and poems and musical compositions, throw a brilliant flood of light on the divine element in human nature. Indeed, creative genius in all the spheres of life is a precious illustration of what the infinite reality is and means. "The true Shekinah of God is man"—man the patient investigator into nature's secrets, man the moralist resisting the clamor of impulses that have behind them the urge of millions of years of growth and exercise for the sake of some ideal in his mind of what ought to be, man the artist manipulating outward sensuous things so as to make them express his inner spiritual states, man the saint and mystic subduing the last recalcitrant elements of human nature into harmony with the divine. Jesus on the cross, Socrates drinking the hemlock, Plato pouring his mighty spirit into his dialogues, Shakespeare penning his great tragic dramas, Angelo carving his Moses, Beethoven

composing his symphonies, Newton and Einstein demonstrating the nature of the relatedness of the multitudinous bodies that people space—all these transcendent spirits and thousands of others illustrate, in their own way, the outreachings of that evolutionary life-process on our earth which began so long ago on the shores of the Cambrian seas.

The grandeur and majesty of the self-sustaining order of the universe; the mystery, creativity and divergence of life; the holiness, saintliness, imaginative genius, and intellectual passion of transcendent human spirits,—these are facts that cannot be doubted. Indisputable truths, established by thought, are just as real as objects of sense-perception. But the point to be noticed here is that they are not only facts, but *values* as well. It may be that, if our insight were sufficiently penetrating, every fact would be a value; but, as it is, many experienced facts are to us only brute facts, bare necessities, dull prosaic existences. Nevertheless, religion and worship do not wait to come into being until man is successful in spiritualizing the universe down to its tiniest fragments. As soon as man has found something mysterious, divine, sacred, holy in his world, he can worship, and his worship of the divine which he has actually discovered in his religion. Practical religion is not a series or system of cognitive judgments, though it may give rise to such; it is essentially a judgment of valuation and a committal of life to the object valued. Religion and worship began not only before the conception of one universal God arose, but even before the many Gods of polytheism and religion; and worship persists even when the worshiper has only the most confused idea of what he means by God. The primary substance of all concep-

tions of God is what we actually find in human experience that we can call holy, divine, sacred, significant, commanding and infinitely worthwhile.

But the very fact that the gods arose in all developed religions in the course of the centuries, indicates that we cannot be indifferent to the soul's need for some mighty symbol that shall organize, for thought and feeling, the whole wealth of values that humanity has discovered. In historical Christianity, God has performed that service. But, alas, the God of Catholic and orthodox Protestant Christianity has been so conceived, made so external to the universe and the human soul, that belief in Him, as ordinarily taught, has become impossible for multitudes of men and women. The fading out of meaning from the great word "God" has orphaned and bewildered and impoverished millions of minds since the Great War began. If it has not left them morally bankrupt, at least it has produced a great spiritual uncertainty and weakened their volitional energy.

How, then, shall we meet the practical situation that confronts us? The very first duty is to exercise a vast patience with those whose minds are bewildered and orphaned, so long as they do not become scornful and proud of their bare negations. To discover a symbol that shall take up into itself the vast wealth of our modern meanings and values is a task not only for spiritual giants, but probably for many generations. In the meantime, we must be sympathetic toward all sorts of spiritual experimentation so long as they are earnest and candid and free.

For example, there are those who feel that all we can do to-day is to insist on the *values* and try to induce men to commit their lives to them. The majesty of

the self-sustaining order of the universe, the mystery and creativity of life, the truth, beauty and goodness which constitute the supreme achievements and pursuits of man, these, say our humanist friends, are real, and our problem is to make them seem real to others and transform life by the power of man's inward reverence for them. Why commit ourselves, they ask, to an endless speculative quest for some one symbol that shall embody all values, when the whole history of the church shows that men tend to forget the real values in their quarreling over the symbols that are supposed to suggest them? That this position is a possible one and a not unfruitful one is shown by the fact that so many have taken it in the past and are taking it to-day. Ethical culturists in one way and Humanists in another try to organize people around values without any specific effort to root their values in some unifying cosmic principle.

But the need for some unifying principle which shall organize all our greater values in one mighty symbol is too great to be resisted. The metaphysical impulse is not as widespread, but it is as real as hunger and love and must, sooner or later, find some way of self-realization.

Many minds feel this need, but are content with a finite God who embodies all our values but has a farther reality outside of him (a veiled being as Wells calls it, or an inscrutable fate as the Greeks named it) and who has to struggle to maintain himself against the blind mechanisms of the physical world. This conception must have great pragmatic value, for men of undoubted intellectual and spiritual power have professed it and lived by it—such men as Renouvier, James, Howison, Rashdall, Hobhouse, Wells, Ames,

Doan, Holmes, and others. It frees them from endless wrestling with the problem of evil; it brings God near to struggling man; it makes the moral struggle of man significant and it lends itself to vivid pictorial representation. All these thinkers would probably agree with Hobhouse that "when everything is regarded as spiritual, the spiritual itself loses all significance." They are so impressed with the irrational or recalcitrant facts that refuse to be brought under any one great conception that they feel compelled to assume that reality has many irreducible aspects, and to be content to affirm that the spiritual is the most significant one of them. The closet-philosopher may sniff at the meager result of the speculative effort of these men; but those who regard philosophy as fundamentally a struggle of the souls of men to affirm their deepest needs, will rejoice that men can find, even in a finite God, such an organization of their values as brings a larger unity and an increased moral confidence into their lives.

Other men and women feel their souls restless and their wills undone until they can find a God raised above all struggle, opposition and change. They want to escape from the many and find a single transcendent Experient who comprehends the whole. The goal of the mystic and the idealist is to close with "a living and active spirit 'whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere,' an experience complete at all points and including every one." Even for a modern philosopher like Royce, "God is an absolute mind that knows, feels, and wills the whole universe in its entirety." Generally, however, the pathway to such an all-inclusive conception is the feeling-experience of the mystic. Reason is so bewildered to-day by the

contradictions of experience and the oppositions of thought that the "single transcendent Experient" of the older idealist is an aspiration rather than an achievement. Bergson with his *élan vital* makes a wider appeal than Royce, and John Burroughs also when he says: "I am persuaded that there is something immanent in the universe, pervading every atom and molecule in it, that knows what it wants—a Cosmic Mind or Intelligence that we must take account of if we would make any headway in trying to understand the world in which we find ourselves."

Nevertheless, though the old confident Idealism is impossible for us now, we must not despair of capturing for thought sooner or later the insights of the poet and the mystic. As Whitehead says: "The testimony of great poets is of much importance. Their survival is evidence that they express deep intuitions of mankind penetrating into what is universal in concrete fact." We must struggle on, even though some times our light seems darkness. As our American aviators were not deterred from attempting to fly across the Atlantic by the loss of the French aviators, so we must not clip the wings of our religious imagination and reason because the religious conceptions of our fathers have come to grief in the storms raised by modern science. Affirming that man's deep need for some unifying principle in his life and thought is a prophecy of its progressive fulfillment, we must venture forth on our mighty quest, not blaming those who concentrate on human values and refuse to follow the gleam, nor trusting too implicitly to our feelings and intuitions, nor raising too soon the pæan of victory, but always seeking for ourselves such intimations of the meaning of reality as came in days gone by to those

who through feeling, love and thought kept themselves *en rapport* with the deeper nature of things. By such intense spirituality, sensitive open-mindedness and bold but critical postulation and experimentation, humanity may yet achieve a vision of a Greater God who shall take up into Himself all our great meanings and values and by so doing unify all nations.

CHAPTER XIV

MORALITY WITHOUT SUPERNATURAL SANCTIONS

One of the main reasons why all forms of modernism in religion seem so dangerous to those who cling tenaciously to the older traditions is that they fear its effects upon the moral life of the people, especially of the young. It is quite customary for such persons to blame the present slump in morals upon the overthrow of the old supernatural sanctions. Both Roman Catholicism and the older Protestantism have made an unhesitating, persistent and wide-reaching use of the principle of rewards and punishments. The fear of Hell and the hope of Heaven are still mighty weapons in the hands of the priest and the orthodox evangelist. These popular guardians of public morals do not hesitate to appeal in the most open way to the self-interested fears or hopes of their audiences in order to secure the conduct they desire. They might hesitate to express their underlying philosophy in the frankly utilitarian language of Paley, but at bottom their philosophy is the same as his. Paley's declaration, "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God and for the sake of everlasting happiness," or "duty is no more than prudence applied to the affairs of the future life," is such a bare-faced, unashamed avowal of self-interest as the ulti-

mate sanction of goodness, that it could not be made to-day without being disguised in sugar-coated words. But the principle of external rewards and punishments, still in wide use, is only the utility-principle of Paley over again. There is a genuine widespread fear that if people should cease to believe in Hell and Heaven as traditionally pictured by the Christian church and, therefore, cease to fear the one and hope for the other, the main motive for moral living would be gone. A God without a Hell for sinners and a Heaven for saints, so the priests and evangelists seem to think, would lose all His authority; a church without a Hell and a Heaven would have no power to appeal to the thoughtless and the hardened and a state without a church to back up its legal sanctions with supernatural sanctions would be incapable of dealing with its criminal and anti-social members. The moral life is still popularly conceived in terms of obedience to the commands of a supernatural Being who has both the power and the will to punish the bad and reward the good.

What is proposed in this chapter is not a mere refutation of this rather childish use of the principle of rewards and punishments but rather, in the first place, a survey of all our resources for the moral life and, then, such a reconstruction of the old supernatural sanctions as shall enable us to give them a significant place among our moral assets.

It was an inevitable result of the old supernaturalist interpretation of religion that man's natural equipment for morality should be undervalued or overlooked altogether. The theologian was perfectly willing to acknowledge the great powers of the natural reason within its proper domain. He could not well erase from the page of history the record of man's progress

in the various arts and sciences or the genius of man in applying them to practical life. But he was generally extremely pessimistic about man's moral nature apart from supernatural grace. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me"—these despairing words of the Psalmist constituted the burden of his sad wail about the moral helplessness of human nature. But in the last few decades, under the influence of popular writers like Prince Kropotkin, Henry Drummond, John Fiske, J. A. Thomson and others, a far more empirical and hopeful view of man's natural endowment for the moral life has been achieved by hundreds of thousands of people. We are as yet too near the Great War to be easily optimistic about human nature. We know its depths of treachery, cruelty, greed and lust more realistically perhaps than our fathers did. Nevertheless human nature is not as black as it has been painted. Altruism is just as natural as egoism. The idea of "nature red in tooth and claw" is now known to be a great exaggeration. Henry Drummond's beautiful chapters¹ on "The Making of a Mother" and "The Making of a Father" make it perfectly plain that some of the finest qualities of human nature are as ancient and deep-rooted as those anti-social qualities that have made the theologian think of human nature as essentially bad and incapable of self-improvement. Instead of being full of wounds, bruises and putrifying sores from the sole of the foot even unto the head, as the theologian erroneously pictured him, man has always had a natural equipment for the moral life of society. It would be folly to contend that that natural equipment was as adequate for social life as his bodily

¹ *The Ascent of Man.*

equipment was for physical life. The body of man achieved fair adequacy for its tasks long, long ago but the mind, both for thought and morals, is much more recent and incomplete and needs, before it can do its work properly, an elaborate formative education. Nevertheless man's instinctive social dispositions are a real part of his psychic make-up and provide a solid foundation for the life of togetherness with his kind.

The utterly artificial and dogmatic character of the old theological pessimism about human nature is soon apparent to anyone who looks at average people without theological glasses on. Such a despairing theory was certainly not based on wide observation and perhaps not always on observation at all. Now that the psychologists' quarrel about human instincts has somewhat quieted down and even John B. Watson admits that man has at least three, we may be permitted to speak without hesitation about man's instinctive dispositions. Under actual observation man is seen to be equipped by natural inheritance with certain instinctive impulses that make social life inevitable and, therefore, comparatively easy for him. By nature he is imitative, suggestible and sympathetic. He is easily induced to do what others are doing and indeed often imitates quite unconsciously and without any inducement. His mind is very susceptible to the opinions and ideas of others and he will take them over and act on them without going through the thought-processes by which they were first gained. His feelings are easily stirred by the bodily manifestation of feeling in others, even though he has not shared the experience that excited the feeling in the first place. His play impulse is greatly stimulated by the presence of others like-minded and he enjoys watching public

games far more in a crowd than when he is alone. He is gregarious in his pleasures as well as in his sports and cannot bear to be far from the possibility of intercourse with his kind. The human parental impulses bind parents to their children, generally if not always, with bonds that only death can break; and though parents, now and then, can keep all of their love for their own children, the more normal thing is for them to extend their love to other children, then to little animals and all little things and finally to every creature that needs protection and care. Even the impulses connected with the self, the so-called self-assertion and self-abasement impulses, are primarily social. The self-assertive man cannot enjoy himself without subordinates to lord it over and the self-abasing man cannot be happy without his leader. These characteristics of human nature are not recondite things which only the psychologist can dig up by long researching. They are obvious to any observant person who mingles freely among children and unsophisticated adults and the only reason why the theologian did not see them was because he looked at people through theological spectacles.

It is not contended, of course, that the mere possession of these natural social impulses guarantees a moral life. Far from it. Other natural impulses, stronger still, may struggle with them and overwhelm them. They may be played upon and perverted by designing individuals as they often are. In their natural state they are no more adequate for the complex social life of the modern world than the natural intellectual aptitudes without deliberate training are adequate for post-graduate work in universities. The contention simply is that they constitute a natural

foundation for the moral life or rather that they furnish the social impulses which, when directed and organized, will issue in the moral character of the individual and an efficient, helpful, happy life with his fellows. Whatever in man's primitive nature makes intercourse with his fellows a necessity for him is the raw material of a moral life if it is adequately stimulated and utilized by his group.

In dealing with man's resources for the moral life I have naturally begun with his inherited social impulses. These are fundamental. Without them, human morality would have been nothing more than the training for work purposes that we impose on our horses. Allied to these natural impulses we find another moral asset of great importance, which has been called, since the days of Bentham at least, the physical sanction. It is not a lofty motive by any means, but the task of socializing human nature is so great that we must take stock of all our capital and use it to the utmost. The body of man, taken not in single impulses but as a functioning whole, is on the side of morals. True, it is only a passive upholder of the moral life. It only makes the sinner wise after the event and sometimes keeps silence until after irreparable injury has been done. Nevertheless, in the whole sweep of human life it is a genuine deterrent of evil and must be reckoned among our moral assets.

Every great abuse of the body, sooner or later, brings pain, disease, misery and at last premature death. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." The great sins of the flesh—lust, drunkenness, drugs and gluttony—leave their mark both on the bodies

and souls of men. Imagination shudders when it tries to follow in thought the career of those women who sell their bodies to satisfy the lusts of men. The loss of modesty and shame, nature's protection of woman against the urge of her own appetites, is followed by a brazen boldness and a lewdness of speech and of conduct horrible for those who know only pure women to contemplate. Words can hardly depict their fate when once they have lost all their physical charm and sink lower and lower until they can hardly find a place to die in. If the experiences of doctors and nurses, with those human beings who suffer either directly or indirectly from the results of excessive lust, could be dramatically told to the young, the story would constitute one of the most powerful warnings ever sounded to the human race. The reproductive instinct ought to be considered a sacred function in human life. Among the wild animals it is rigidly controlled by instinct; among our domesticated animals it is even more rigidly controlled by man for his own ends; but among men it is often treated as though its primary purpose were mere sensuous enjoyment, and to that end it is commercialized with a cruelty and an unabashed licentiousness that would make the wild animals, if they could borrow man's imagination and reason for a few hours, hang their heads in shame. We need not try to picture the physical consequences of drunkenness, gluttony and the use of drugs. On the whole they are not so revolting or so serious for the whole race as lust, but drunkenness at least leads to lust or rather destroys all those natural inhibitions which keep the sex-instinct within its legitimate channels.

Whether this great asset of the moral life—the physical sanction—is being utilized to the full may well

be doubted. Most human beings seem to exercise their imagination very little. They cannot, without help, follow their deeds in thought to their natural consequences. They obey blindly the urge of some definite bodily want and do not give the whole body a chance to be heard. Utilizing the physical sanction to the utmost means much more than teaching physiology in the schools. Physiological facts may be for a time lodged in the memory without having much effect on the imagination. It is the personal application of knowledge that counts; and only the dramatic presentation to the imagination of the concrete consequences of lust, drunkenness, gluttony, and drugs will ever make "the physical sanction" of morals as powerful a motive to good living as it ought to be.

Thus far we have discussed our moral assets without making any mention of the so-called supernatural sanctions and it ought to be encouraging that we can do so. Plainly our moral life does not hang by as slender a thread as the orthodox theologians would have us believe. No more dependent on supernatural sanctions are the next two or three items in the list of our moral resources that we shall discuss.

"Political sanction" is the name given by Bentham to the moral asset we shall next mention. The two motives to moral conduct thus far discussed arise within the nature of man as an individual. The political sanction arises within the group of which he is a member. But, though in oligarchical countries law is imposed on the subjects of it willy-nilly, in a democratic country, where every one is an actual or a potential citizen, the sanction of law may be considered after all as a self-imposed sanction. Where one is subject to laws which he or his representative has made, the

law never seems so foreign as where those who must obey it have no part in its making. But even in well-governed democracies the majesty of law is never so imposing morally as the majesty of conscience and social good will. One who does good or refrains from evil only because the majesty of the law, the courts and the police-system overawes him, cannot be trusted out of sight of the policeman. Even when we interpret law as the organized expression of the will of the people, dignify the courts with all the old-world ceremony, describe the office of the law-maker as one of the highest in the land and exalt the state as the most comprehensive of all social institutions, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that the political sanction has an element of externality about it. The last weapon that the law uses in enforcing the common will is always the big stick. The policeman may not be in evidence but he is somewhere in the background. Other agencies, training us for the virtuous life, coax and persuade and entreat us to follow the right; but the sanctions of the law are positive, commanding and in the last analysis corporal.

Nevertheless, the compulsion of law is a form of social control which we have not outgrown and are not likely to outgrow. If we had no other moral asset but the law, social order would be impossible, but along with the other moral agencies, law is indispensable as a means for inculcating the more obvious and necessary rules of social morality among those classes of the population who are too dull and unimaginative or too gross and licentious or too selfish and calculating to be sensitive to the higher appeals of public opinion and the more refined inner moral and religious sanctions of conduct. And because the law

is still one of the corner-stones of the social order, its majesty, its impartiality, its repressive and compulsive power must be maintained in every way possible. The present slump in morals which can hardly be denied, has been traced, as already noted, to the breakdown of the old supernatural sanctions, but it would be far more accurate to trace it to the breakdown in law-enforcement. Law has so often shown itself incapable of dealing vigorously with the rich, the politically influential and the clever crooks of the big corporations that the fear of its repressive power no longer acts as a deterrent on those selfish men who prey on society from the highest positions to which politics or business can lift them. In recent years it has displayed as regrettable a weakness with those criminals who prey on society from the bottom. The lone criminal is easily handled but combinations of criminals in league with politicians and policemen can make a farce of the whole administration of justice and especially of the punishment of crime. This is not the place to deal at length with the general disintegration which our sense of respect for the majesty of law has undergone or to indicate the causes of it. It is enough to affirm with emphasis that the political sanction ought to be and may be one of the genuine moral assets of a community. Law even at the best is based on force and force is not often a highly moral agency but when law with its threat of force is applied justly, impartially and unequivocally, it is, as Paul said, a schoolmaster to lead us to a higher form of moral sanction. Justice Stephen, speaking of the effectiveness of law in Scotland, says: "The reason why it works so quietly is that no one doubts either its existence, or its direction, or its crushing superiority to any individual resistance

which could be offered to it." When a just law is administered so as to produce that kind of respect for it, it is a moral asset of unquestionable value.

The "moral sanction" as Bentham called it, which we shall next discuss, differs from the political sanction in that while the latter uses physical force as a last resort, the former foreswears the use of all external compulsion whatsoever. Like the inherited social instincts and the physical sanction, the moral sanction exerts all its pressure from within the mind of the individual himself. The function of the mind which exercises this pressure is called conscience and theology has made a great mystery of it, but, though it is truly a mystery, it is only a part of the greater mystery of the mind. The creative, synthetic, interpretative, directing, controlling, foreseeing, sorrowing, repenting, aspiring mind of man is our greatest near-at-hand mystery and we are never likely to clear it up because the only agency by which we can understand the mind is the mind itself and the mind that knows is never likely to catch up to the mind that experiences, feels and aspires. Of this greater mystery conscience is a mysterious part. Etymologically it comes from the same roots as consciousness and may, therefore, be defined as the whole mind acutely occupied with the field of conduct or, in other words, as all that pressure upon conduct which comes from within the mind itself. It is no more possible to write the whole history of conscience than to write the whole history of mind and those psychologists who feel that they have plucked out its secret because they have overthrown the old supernatural explanation of it and discovered some of its important social ingredients, are unduly optimistic over their analysis. Biology has not discovered the

secret of life by analyzing the mechanisms through which it functions and no more has psychology laid bare the inner nature of conscience by showing how and where it has obtained its moral content. Like life, conscience remains not only mysterious but immensely impressive, the vital source from which flows moral energy for the maintenance of the present social order or the creation of a new and better social order.

The pressure of conscience on conduct is, on the higher levels of life, one of our greatest moral assets. A living conscience is not only cheaper for society but also more efficient than the policeman. When society can rule people from within their own minds, social control becomes a fairly easy problem. When social evolution has advanced to the point where people feel intensely the pains of social disapproval and the pleasures of social approval, what society calls decency can be maintained with a minimum of conscious political effort. Mrs. Grundy has no courts, policemen or prisons to enforce her decrees, but when people have reached a certain stage of personal evolution, she rules them with a look and a nod. The great moralists and the religious innovators have always had a poor opinion of Mrs. Grundy, that is, of the ordinary community-conscience, because she has blocked the way of their great reforms. But Mrs. Grundy has her value nevertheless. When one recalls the wild chaos which prevails wherever there is no active public opinion, or when one reminds himself of the rank individualism or egotism that soon appear in those people, either of the upper or the lower classes, who are not sensitive to public opinion, one is grateful for so effective a ruler as Mrs. Grundy even though the values she defends are the lesser ones. The problem of

society is always twofold: to hold as many people as possible in some sort of mental unity or social togetherness and to carry the people forward to some new interest or some higher moral level and at the very least Mrs. Grundy helps to solve the first part of our problem. Fashion is her widest realm of influence and fashion seems to the individualistic spectator of life one of the meanest idols that human beings ever worship and yet after all fashion is a form of social cohesion and as such has a modicum of moral value. Whatever makes the individual strive to secure the approval and avoid the disapproval of his neighbors is for him a moral asset. The standard of his neighbors may not be very high but it is likely to be higher than that of some unsocial individual born and reared among them. If it were easy to lift people to, and maintain them at, a high moral level, we could afford to sniff at the social conscience and all its instruments of control, but all history testifies to the difficulty of moral evolution (as Mrs. Browning says: "It takes a high-souled man to move the masses to a cleaner sty"); and, hence, we must count among our moral resources the influence of general public opinion, both to repress evil actions and compel to good ones. The ordinary social conscience seldom inspires people to any romantic goodness, but it nevertheless is a conscience, that is, a pressure upon conduct from within the mind of the individual himself and is on the way to something higher.

But there is a higher form of conscience than the social conscience. To be ruled by the opinion that other people have of one is a real moral attainment, because below that level one is apt to be ruled by his passions or the lowly principle of physical rewards and

punishments. But to be ruled by the opinion one has of oneself is a much higher moral attainment. The fear of the social conscience keeps us straight when we are in the public eye but the fear which the lower self has of the contempt and wrath of its twin-brother, the higher self, when it has betrayed the latter into a disgraceful deed, keeps us straight even when no one else knows or is likely ever to know what we have done.

This doubling back of the self upon itself, this fearless criticism of the old natural man by the new spiritual man, to use Biblical language, is one of the great achievements of evolution and one of our greatest moral assets. To have the law, the court, the policeman, the prison and the executioner all housed within our own *self* is certainly a miracle of social efficiency. What a revolution of our present feeble but costly administration of justice would be effected if only so seemingly simple a thing as a highly individualized conscience could be made universal! But though it looks simple, the individualized conscience in all is as yet the far-off goal to which our social evolution is only slowly moving.

This individualizing of conscience is not brought about by a separation of the individual from society. Separation from society always brings spiritual death. The moral man is always a *socius*. Nor is it the result of transferring one's allegiance from one compact group to another. Throughout all of our earlier years we are submerged in our local social group almost as an animal is submerged in its herd. But though we should remain all our life long in the local group into which we were born, we need not continue to be of it as the animal must. Through books, magazines, newspapers, etc., we can live in the society of people

actual and ideal, living and dead, of whom the majority of our neighbors know nothing. These persons whom we have never seen or met come through the years to constitute our real social *milieu*. We test our conduct, not by the public opinion of our local group, but by the imagined approval of the great living and the great dead. We seem to be independent of others in our judgments and in our lives only because those who influence us are scattered far both in space and in time and are not known to those who judge us. We ourselves sometimes mistake our independence of our local group for independence of humanity, but there is not such moral independence except among the abnormal. Spiritual intercourse with the higher spirits of our own time or of days gone by keeps our minds keyed up to a pitch beyond the reach of our neighbors who are confined for their stimulus too largely to their local peers.

Those who achieve this individual conscience are the pioneers of all the great universal movements of the human race, paradoxical as this combination of individuality and universality may seem. They leap over all national and racial boundaries. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus and Paul; Buddha, Confucius and Plato; St. Francis, Luther, Channing and Tagore belong to the more individualized spirits of all races. The mere community-conscience, of which patriotism is the noisiest representative, unites the local group but tends to cut it off from all other groups. So long as Mrs. Grundy rules the world, there will be wars and rumors of war. Local patriotisms keep half of Europe and seemingly all of China in a chronic state of political and social bedlam. But for scientific purposes the world is one. There is no national mathematics, as-

tronomy, physics or chemistry. Here the individual is completely free to reach such conclusions as the facts seem to warrant, and, behold! Japanese, Hindu, German, French, English and American individuals reach independently many judgments that all can accept. Individuality seems the path to universality, in intellectual matters at least, and in morals too it would seem as though only the highly individualized consciences of different nations can reach the same conclusions or, if that is found impossible, do the next best thing, agree to disagree.

We have said very little thus far of the "supernatural sanction," the fourth item in Bentham's list. It is impossible to deny the effectiveness of this sanction in the past over people who believed unquestioningly in Heaven and Hell. Pleasure and pain have been nature's instruments of control in the lower animal world; reward and punishment in the human world are only pleasure and pain postponed; and Heaven and Hell are only reward and punishment transferred to another world. It is quite true that people have been controlled and are still being controlled by the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell. But there are many weaknesses in this sanction. In the first place it is based frankly on the principle that the ultimate sanction of morality is self-interest. If the self referred to in the phrase self-interest were sufficiently refined and socialized, no objection could be taken to it. The only way in which anything here or hereafter can become an object for us at all is to appeal somehow to the interests of the self. But the self may be a very narrow, crude, bodily, circumscribed thing or it may expand until it takes all humanity into the sweep of its interest. And one trouble with the supernatural sanc-

tion is that it has always appealed to the narrow, crude, circumscribed self and made people more eager to *save* this crude self than to expand and refine it until it became a self worth saving. Such a sanction may have its value in the earlier stages of individual and social life when morality is merely prudential, and *must* is far more powerful than *ought*; but it blocks the path of spiritual progress when it is still used after people have advanced to a point where they could respond to a nobler appeal. Even in the earlier stages of morality, Heaven and Hell are both somewhat too remote to be always effective; and their inevitability is weakened, for those who still manage to believe in them, by the power of the priest to modify their working in this case or that; but, on the whole, during the period of life when *must* has more terrors than *ought* has attractions, it is quite true that the supernatural sanction has been an effective agency, along with the political sanction and the moral sanction, in lifting the conduct of men and women to a level that without its help might not have been reached at all.

But the great weakness of the old supernatural sanction is the difficulty of believing in the Heaven and Hell with which it proposes to reward and punish. Without committing ourselves until the next chapter to any position on the question of immortality, it is obvious that Heaven and Hell as pictured in the past cannot be located by the imagination in the universe as now conceived. Even a Jonathan Edwards could no longer frighten people by preaching a sermon on "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." Hell has lost its terrors and Heaven its attractions, except for those who are completely out of touch with the advancing hosts of science and history. For all the latter, the

old supernatural sanction is as dead as the gods of Homer.

But, though the old supernatural sanction of morality is gone, we are not necessarily bereft of all cosmic backing for the moral life. If we cannot any longer believe that "God governs mankind by means of rewards and punishments," we may believe with the philosophical theists that the moral life is rooted in the Cosmos, that goodness is but the flowering here of some primal constituent of Reality which is as un-derived as space or time or energy or form or any other irreducible aspect of Being.

Two motives at least lie behind this idealistic affirmation. There is, first, the practical necessity of believing that our values, our moral ideals, are not mere empty conceits, mere products of human self-assertion, but are somehow more indicative of the true nature of reality than "the stupidities and brutalities by which they are so often overwhelmed"; and, second, there is the speculative conviction that we cannot really sever the life of man from the universe of which he is a part or ignore his dependence on the conditions by which he is surrounded; in other words, the discovery that we cannot think things through without arriving at some sort of a metaphysics. Moral weakness and intellectual confusion inevitably follow when we affirm that there is an ultimate antithesis between man's ideals and the universe in which they have to be realized, or that man is an orphan or an alien in a world utterly devoid of any ideal tendency which might be conceived to be the source of his moral being.

It will not be contended here that this idealistic affirmation is grounded in a reasoning that is coercively demonstrable. The underlying conviction of this whole

book is that our higher values, cognitive as well as moral, are postulates, spiritual ventures which find their final validation in their power to order and give meaning to our experience. Hence it is contended here, with William James, that the will-to-believe in matters of great import, where theoretical certainty cannot be attained one way or the other, is more likely to lead to some positive value than the negative will-to-disbelieve. We might say that it is better to run the risk of being duped now and then by a belief that may turn out to be erroneous than miss the stimulus of beliefs that may turn out to be true, by refusing to entertain them until we can demonstrate their validity. And although great dangers to the practical and theoretical life are involved in uncritical believing, nevertheless the old motto "never venture, never win" is a truer guide to practical conduct than the hesitation or inaction that accompanies the horror of being duped. The urgencies of life are often so great that he who will not act by what little light he has, will find himself eliminated from the situation altogether. And in this matter of affirming a cosmic backing for the moral life, history seems to show that what is deepest in man cannot be evoked without some sort of orientation toward the ultimate meaning and value of reality, or, in the more familiar language without some sort of conscious relation of the individual soul to that significant factor in reality which religion calls God.

Nor will it be contended here that this belief in the cosmic ground of goodness calls to our aid in times of emergency anything in the nature of a supernatural agency. It seems hard for religious people to realize that the value of religious belief is not in bringing external aid to us but in raising our own powers to their

highest level of activity and effectiveness. The energy which faith arouses is man's own energy but an energy which is normally latent and which cannot be aroused by any ordinary stimulus. Nelson's message to his sailors at the battle of Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty" raised their patriotic sentiment to a high pitch of enthusiasm and concentrated all their physical and psychical energy for this great struggle. A boy struggling with temptation for the first time in a great city often finds his power of resistance intensified by the memory of the eager hopes which his parents, back in the simple home, have placed on him. The sudden memory of their passionate interest in him often turns a threatened defeat into a splendid victory. In both these cases, it is the evoking of the latent energy in the human spirit, by the sentiment or the belief, that produces the heightened action. So is it with the religious sanction of morals. Only when men's souls have been oriented to the cosmic source of their higher being, when their minds have affirmed in some form or other a moral order of the universe, have they found themselves able to die voluntarily for their cause. Nothing short of some such affirmation has ever been able to raise the life of man to the highest level of heroic devotion or self-sacrifice for ideal ends.

A similar conviction is so well expressed by Professor George B. Foster that I shall quote it in closing:

In our modern world our religious faith must be transferred from tradition to the life that made the tradition, from authorities, which have their day and cease to be, to the creator, human and divine, which made and ever makes anew the

authorities—that eternal creative spirit which is immanent and constant in all historical personality and progress. Our trust must be in this Life and this Spirit, not in some particular deposit thereof, as the true religious basis of ethics. That basis will then be seen to be inspirational rather than regulative, dynamic rather than static, creative and nourishing rather than statutory and repressive. But such a basis is indeed necessary. The conviction that the whole of which we are a part shares with us in ideal-achieving capacity gives indispensable courage and comfort for our moral vocation, even as Paul said, if God be for us, who can be against us.²

² *The Function of Religion*, pp. 169-173.

CHAPTER XV

HOPE FOR THE DEAD

The title of this chapter is a quotation from Robert Ingersoll's address spoken at the grave of a friend's child. It occurs in his last sentence which runs as follows: "We, too, have our religion, and it is this,—help for the living, hope for the dead."

To those whose faith is so feeble that they must have absolute guarantees of the sure outcome of all the moral enterprises and spiritual ventures of the ideal life before they will commit themselves to them, Ingersoll's "hope for the dead" will seem very meager comfort and a dubious guarantee. But to those who prefer the open road to the cozy corners and the glory of going on to the static satisfactions of achievement, hope for the dead will be enough. Spiritual religion has always had two enemies—the conscious deliberate foes outside of the church, such as skeptics, materialists and sheer worldlings and the unconscious foes within the church, that is, those unimaginative believers who have materialized every ideal element in the faith—making God into a verbal idol or one object among other objects, the heroic death of Jesus into a sort of judicial transaction whereby man has escaped paying the just penalty for his sins, the beautiful, poetical and imaginative messages of the prophets of the Old and New Testaments into hard unchanging dogmas and the

hope for the future into the *solid* realities of the traditional Heaven and Hell. No great religion has ever been able to maintain itself at the level of its founder or its first adherents; a materializing of its ideal symbols almost inevitably ensues as its influence reaches ever-widening circles. Orthodox Judaism is a very steep descent from the noble ethical idealism of the Hebrew prophets; the Buddhism of Thibet is a complete reversal of all the moral principles for which Buddha stood; Christianity in its Roman form, with its elaborate ritual, its hierarchical organization, its realistic representations of the three realms of the hereafter, and its worldly ambitions, pretends to derive directly from the life, teaching and authority of Jesus, but no reputable student of the New Testament or of the history of the early church, can find in them any authentication of these extravagant claims; Protestant Christianity is much nearer no doubt to the original sources but no person with any historical or literary insight could ever suppose that the parables of Jesus and the great spiritual passages in Paul's letters were the sources from which the Protestant creeds such as the Augsburg Confession, the Thirty Nine Articles or the Westminster Confession were drawn; and, finally, the so-called Christian nations, both Catholic and Protestant, although professedly followers of the Prince of Peace, have been the most military peoples of the modern world.

I have brought forward these instances of the general deterioration of the spiritual quality of the great religions as they have gained popularity and taken shape in institutions because they prepare the way for the particular illustration of the general principle in which we are now interested. The doctrine of the

immortality of the soul has occupied a far larger place in popular Christian thought than it did in the mind of Jesus or than it does in the teaching of many of the greatest exponents of the spiritual meaning of Christianity. True, this stress on the belief in immortality has the authority of Kant behind it, for he said that "without a belief in a future life no religion can be conceived to exist" but Kant's conception of religion was utterly lacking in the higher mystical element. It is a plain matter of history that great religions such as those of the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans flourished with only the dimmest hope of a future for the individual soul. No doubt this lack of belief in the individual future life in these three religions was primarily due to the fact that the individual had not yet learned to think of himself in terms of his spiritual uniqueness but identified himself so completely with his group that he was content with his nation's survival, but the fact remains, nevertheless, that religions have flourished and achieved great heights of moral ideality without a clear belief in the immortality of the individual soul. And many modern exponents of Christianity have declared with no uncertain sound that the belief in personal immortality, though important, is a secondary rather than a primary doctrine of the Christian faith. I shall quote the deliberate judgments of three recognized exponents of a spiritual Christianity.

Schleiermacher says:

The goal and the character of the religious life is not the immortality desired and believed in by many. . . . It is not the immortality that is outside of time, behind it or rather after it, and

which still is in time. It is the immortality we can have now in this temporal life. In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite, and in every moment to be eternal, that is the immortality of religion.

Edward Caird declares that

an over-anxious desire to prove the immortality of the soul is not by any means an evidence of a religious temper of mind. Indeed, the belief in immortality may easily become an unhealthy occupation with a future salvation, which prevents us from seeking for salvation for mankind here—unless it be that natural spring of confidence in its own supreme reality, that unbelief in death, which seems to be the necessary characteristic or concomitant of true spiritual life.

George Adam Smith says that

it is well for us all sometimes to pitch our religious life in terms which do not include the hope of a future. Most of the crises of religious experience may be achieved, as some of the grandest Psalms fulfil their music, without the echo of one of the far-off bells of heaven. A man may pass through the evangelical experiences of conversion, regeneration and redemption without thinking any more of the future than the little child thinks, but only glad that his Father is with him. The Old Testament is of use in reminding us that the hope of immortality is one of the secondary and inferential elements of religious experience.

I quote these pronouncements, not because they settle any of our speculative difficulties concerning the belief in the future life, but because they indicate the spirit in which those difficulties should be approached. Those who discuss the future life should take to heart the warning of Edward Caird: "An over-anxious desire to prove the immortality of the soul is not by any means an evidence of a religious temper of mind."

Do people really desire to survive the death of the body? No one is in a position to answer this question with any genuine authority. If we go back for our evidence to the ancient world, we find an astounding contrast between the Egyptians and the Hindus. The interest of the Egyptians in the future life was so great that it dwarfed their concern for the present life. The tombs of the dead Kings were even more wonderful than the palaces of the living ones. They were so in love with life that they desired to have it prolonged after death so far as possible in its earthly form. Hence they built burial-chambers for the dead, furnished them with food, serving statuettes, pictures on the walls, pottery models and everything that could serve the needs or enhance the dignity of the occupant of the chamber. Even the body of the dead was preserved from decay by the embalmer's art, so that the living might think of the dead as still persisting in the very form of the present life. All this seems to us, no doubt, to argue in the Egyptians a childish imagination and a low degree of intelligence but it testifies not merely to a belief in immortality but also to a desire to preserve life as it had been experienced here. Whether this love of life was due to the easy and stable economic conditions under which they lived because of the richness of the Nile valley or to some more

psychological factor we probably cannot say, but at any rate they did desire the continuance of the existence of the souls of their dead and their imaginations fabricated all sorts of strange accounts of this continuance. With the Hindus the case is entirely different. They too believed in immortality but they did not desire the continuance of life in anything like its present form. On the contrary they longed to get free from the wheel of life on which they felt themselves bound. They dreaded immortality, although they believed in it, because it involved them in an unending sequence of rebirths and all the miseries which life brought in its train. The rapid spread of Buddhism, for the first few centuries after its founding, was due to its promise of release, through the cessation of desire, from this necessity of rebirth. The longed-for Nirvana was probably not annihilation but it was supposed, at least, to bring to an end the painful rhythm of our present mortal life. Again we cannot say for certain whether this horror of life was due to physical or psychological conditions or both, but at least it is certain that the ancient Hindus did not love the life from which, however, they did not know how to escape.

How strongly and how universally people desire immortality in the Christian world to-day, it would be difficult to say. Still such facts as we have collected seem to indicate that we are much nearer to the ancient Egyptians than to the ancient Hindus. Various questionnaires sent out to different selected persons have brought out the fact that immortality is still strongly and widely desired. Leuba, whose own attitude to the belief in immortality is frankly negative, reports that of physical scientists, 83.8 percent of the less eminent and 67.7 percent of the more eminent; of

biologists, 70.7 percent of the less eminent and 68.4 percent of the more eminent; of psychologists 53.8 percent desired it. Of 3218 replies to the questionnaire of the American Society for Psychical Research 2993 were in the affirmative and 225 in the negative. Even T. H. Huxley confessed in a letter to John Morley that as he grew older he thought with horror of annihilation.

These answers would indicate that the desire for a future life, though not always strong, is fairly general. The interest in the subject as a topic for general discussion ebbs and flows. Naturally youth is not vitally concerned, except in abnormal circumstances such as sickness or war. Those who are immersed in affairs and are bearing the burdens of our economic, political and educational life do not ordinarily count it a live issue. Those who are interested keenly and all the time are the old and the feeble and the spiritualists and the psychical researchers, but no one knows when some new experience or some poignant tragedy may make the belief in immortality one of the most precious things or the disbelief in it one of the most painful things in his whole life. The fact that the belief or the disbelief does not permanently occupy the mind gives no indication of its power to comfort or disturb when events occur which force it into the white focus of our attention.

It seems probable, also, that few people are satisfied with the prospect of the conservation of values without the conservation of personality. George Eliot's interpretation of immortality in her beautiful poem "The Choir Invisible" as an immortality of social influence is of course true as far as it goes and on the basis of it a very noble appeal can be made. As a great soldier

can die happy when he knows that his army is winning, so it is contended that the individual should be quite content to be completely eliminated so long as he can feel that his life has helped some worthy cause to final victory. In comparison with the entire committal of the self to a great social enterprise, the demand for personal immortality seems small and selfish.

But in answer to this line of argument three counter contentions may be brought forward. We must always be on our guard against interpreting human good into the impersonal terms of "cause" or "enterprise." The tendency to deify abstractions is very strong in the speculative mind. Human good is the good of persons, in their social relations and in their private lives, and to regard the life of the individual as having value only in so far as it furthers some impersonal or evolutionary social process is to give up the real and the concrete for the vague and the abstract. Moreover, this theory seems to take for granted the permanence of the human race on the earth but according to the speculations of most scientists this is probably an unwarranted assumption. Science is becoming more cautious about its judgments on speculative matters but it seems to be as yet fairly certain that as the earth radiates more and more of its heat and the sun's rays become less powerful, human life will become quite impossible in its old habitat. If this should be the case and the human race itself should be without permanence, all that the theory of social immortality gives us is a stay of execution. The immortality of the race is no more guaranteed than the immortality of the individual. In addition to these two weaknesses, the theory is unsatisfactory because we cannot resist either the

feeling that the concrete individual is more than his work and influence or the desire that this "more" should be preserved. No human personality ever finds complete expression in his actual achievements. In every soul there are unutilized powers and in most individuals there are capacities of which those individuals themselves are not even aware. Few human lives ever give us the impression of having come to complete fruition. Moreover, a very great man is seldom completely understood by his immediate friends and disciples and when he dies those who knew him best seldom feel that he is preserved to them entirely in their memory of him. It would seem that, unless the individual survives, there can be no preservation of more than the smallest fraction of the personal or spiritual values of our lives. Consequently the world would appear to be all the poorer for the complete annihilation of the personal spirit apart from its social influence. Every personality is a unique focusing of the psychic factors of the world and its entire elimination would look like a defeat for the creative process we call spiritual life.

The upshot of our inquiry thus far seems to be that people for the most part do desire to survive the death of the body and are not satisfied with the mere conservation of their influence. Of course this desire for immortality does not guarantee its own fulfillment—we have many wants that the universe does not seem to honor. But it shows at least that the problem of immortality is a live issue and that in discussing it we are not threshing old straw. If the demand for survival were absolutely universal and persistent so that it functioned like an instinct, we might legitimately

contend that the universe would fulfill it but the facts do not warrant any such simple solution of our problem.

It is not necessary to repeat in detail here the reasons why we cannot now use the resurrection-narratives of the New Testament as a foundation for the belief in immortality. The statement of Matthew that after the resurrection of Jesus "the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs, they entered into the holy city, and appeared unto many," shows us at once the sort of credulity that prevailed in the circles where the narratives of the resurrection of Christ grew up. As Professor William Morgan¹ says: "The later the tradition the more numerous and circumstantial do the stories of the risen Christ's intercourse with his disciples become. These stories cannot be regarded as the basis of the church's faith in a risen Lord but only as the creation and expression of that faith. Like the fore-history they are not literal fact but rather poetry." A critical examination of the stories of the resurrection, as Morgan indicates, completely destroys the evidential value which the older apologetics found in them. That examination discovers three weak points in the evidence on which the old belief relied: (1) The accounts of the resurrection are not only divergent but in some cases contradictory. (2) There are two traditions of the appearances of Jesus—the Galilean tradition in Matthew and Luke and the Jerusalem tradition in Luke and John. (3) Paul who is one of the earliest witnesses to the resurrection makes no distinction between the first appearances of Jesus to his disciples and his appearance to

¹ *The Nature and Right of Religion*, p. 231.

Paul himself at the time of his conversion and not one of the three passages that describe the conversion indicates that Paul had seen any precisely outlined figure. For these and other reasons the traditional Christian argument for immortality has lost its compelling power. Even when it was firmly believed in, its force was weakened by the fact that Jesus was not regarded as a man among men but as the God-Man and to infer from the resurrection of a God-Man that all men were immortal seemed a logical fallacy. If it could be definitely proved that the man Jesus had risen from the dead, the question of human survival would be settled forever, for one clear case would be enough. But while the New Testament narratives seem convincing to those who already believe, they utterly fail to supply the coercive evidence which the critical doubter demands.

How fares it, then, with the empirical evidence for survival in our own day? Spirit-return differs from the resurrection of Jesus in that it does not involve a reanimation of the body of the dead and therefore puts less of a strain upon our will-to-believe and of spirit-return millions of people have been convinced during the last half century. The evidence for it falls into two classes, physical manifestations such as rappings and the so-called materialization of spirit forms, and the psychical phenomena of auditions, apparitions, crystal visions, automatic writing and automatic speaking.

The first kind of evidence is generally pronounced worthless even by those who believe in the validity of the second kind. Mediums who pretend to produce supernatural physical manifestations in the seance have, with few if any exceptions, been detected in some sort

of conscious fraud. It was the special task of Frank Podmore as examiner for the Society of Psychical Research in England to investigate these phenomena and in his *History of Spiritualism* he tells us how these physical mediums have been able to deceive not only the general public but often the very elect. They succeed (1) because of the inability of the observer to master attention;² (2) because of the imperfections of memory;³ (3) because of the belief in the good faith of the performer;⁴ and, (4) because of the inadequacy of all our observations. Physical mediumship has failed to meet any really exacting test and has been shown to be permeated through and through with fraud.⁵

The second class of evidence is of a very different kind and is at least more reliable. It consists of (1) cases where details concerning the ostensible communicator are given which are known to the student or inquirer but are not known to the medium; (2) cases where details are given concerning the ostensible communicator which are not known to the medium or anyone present; (3) cases in which the details concerning the ostensible communicator are given which are unknown to any person living but are subsequently discovered; and (4) cases of cross-correspondence. It was the conviction of Richard Hodgson and William James and many others that the hypothesis of fraud and delusion in connection with the mediumship of Mrs. Piper was out of the question and that the information she imparted was not gained by normal means. But though they agreed on the genuineness of

² Vol. II, p. 216 ff.

³ Vol. II, p. 212.

⁴ Vol. II, p. 272.

⁵ Vol. II, pp. 89-91.

the phenomena they did not agree on the explanation of them. One group explained them by spirit-return and another group by telepathy.

In the present state of the investigation into the empirical evidence for survival, it is impossible, without a good deal of initial bias, to reach any assured conclusion at all. The conclusion of the academic psychologist and especially of the behaviorists that the whole subject is "bosh" and beneath the dignity of science seems far too cocksure and pugnacious in view of the fact that many men of genius both in science and literature have felt it incumbent on them to spend toilsome and tedious hours in collecting and examining the evidence. The position of James, Sidgwick, Podmore and McDougall, that spirit-return has not been proved, that telepathy cannot account for all the phenomena unless we ascribe to it powers utterly beyond those that have been demonstrated and that the proper attitude of mind is one of suspense, waiting and further study, will be congenial to all those who feel no urgent call to decide one way or the other. Nevertheless such a suspense of mind does not get us anywhere unless we vigorously prosecute our inquiries. It jars the non-committal mind into a state of wide-awakeness to read in the *Foundations of Spiritualism* by W. Whately Smith, a thoroughly competent academic British psychologist, the following paragraph:

The true case against the spiritistic hypothesis is simply that we cannot assign definite limits to latent memory, telepathy or subliminal mental activity generally. We cannot say what facts are beyond their powers and, therefore, due to spirits. Still we are being forced into admitting more and

more complicated concatenations of telepathy, subliminal mental activity, secondary personality and the like in order to evade the spiritistic explanation of certain psychical phenomena. The balance of probabilities is favorable to the spiritistic explanation, not overwhelmingly but still distinctly so. At present the trend of psychical research seems in that direction.

In the face of such a statement by a psychologist who is an expert in technical psychological matters such as *The Measurement of Emotion* (the title of one of his books), it would be manifest folly for those who desire to believe in personal immortality and to found their belief on as solid ground as they can find, to close their minds against the work of the psychical research societies. Certainly the so-called communications from the dead do not seem as yet very interesting or convincing, but one authentic piece of evidence would be of such immense value both for the religious person and for the speculative thinker that the work of the psychical research societies ought to be encouraged rather than sniffed at.

If we cannot share the traditional faith of the Christian that our immortality is guaranteed to us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and if we do not feel that any trustworthy empirical proof of survival has yet been established by psychical research, we seem shut up to very general considerations for any theoretical justification of our "hope for the dead." That will not materially disturb those who cherish the hope on grounds that cannot easily be subjected to theoretical examination. Several of our greatest modern poets, conspicuously Browning, Tennyson, Emerson and

Whitman, were profoundly convinced of the immortality of the soul. Sometimes Tennyson clung to it with difficulty, that is, he felt in his own mind the doubts concerning it that were current in his time, but he never yielded to them. The other three seemed to be completely confident without any argument at all. With them the faith in immortality was, as Edward Caird describes it, "That natural spring of confidence in its own supreme reality, that unbelief in death, which seems to be a necessary characteristic or concomitant of true spiritual life." Walt Whitman declared that he *knew* that he was immortal and no doubt he meant with a *knowing* other than that revealed in our ordinary cognitive processes. Most of those who profess to have experienced "cosmic consciousness" echo the same assurance. Most mystics think they can see through death and catch glimpses at least of the "beyond." If all of us could attain to such subjective assurance, there would be no problem of immortality at all. But—alas—it seems only for the few. We do actually feel assured of many truths which we could by no means demonstrate to an unbeliever—the glory of our country, the fidelity of our friends, the superiority of the good to the evil, the worth of the individual soul—but it would fortify our will-to-believe in immortality very materially if we could only lay our hands on some sound general considerations which point in that direction.

The search for such general considerations might take two directions. In the first place, we might try to show that the continuance of the soul-life after the death of the body involves no contradiction of our assured knowledge. If it is true that science is not prepared to demonstrate the survival of the soul, no more

is it prepared to demonstrate the opposite. If we could find reasons for believing that what we mean by life is not synonymous with matter and energy but rather is something that directs matter and energy and that what we mean by mind is not synonymous with what we know as brain-process; in other words, if we could feel that life and mind are factors which, while they owe their present functioning to matter and energy, do not owe their existence to matter and energy but are coördinate with them in a Reality which comprises many inter-dependent factors within it, then we would not seem to fly in the face of certain knowledge if we postulated the continuance of these factors after the dissolution of their present connection with the body. We are obliged to confess our ignorance of the conditions under which life and mind might exist, apart from the bodies in which we find them functioning, but we are equally obliged to confess our ignorance of what or where life was before it appeared in the living organisms where we find it. The old-fashioned materialism which assumed that matter, as we know it in the physical sciences, is the ultimate reality is now abandoned by the physicists themselves. Matter has disappeared into energy and is no longer regarded as the innermost structure of reality. The physical universe is more mysterious than it appeared to some of our fathers and the explanation of any one living thing seems to require all the factors that we can find operative in the universe as a whole.

Especially is this the case in our human mental life. The attempt to explain it entirely in terms of neural process invariably breaks down. Mental experience and neural process have some subtle interrelation that we cannot as yet formulate in a law but that they are

heterogeneous in their behavior can hardly be doubted by those who approach the problem of their relation without bias. This heterogeneity may be illustrated in various ways:

(1) The neural processes that accompany our sensations, say of color, are quite different from the sensations themselves. (2) My memory of an event that occurred twenty-five years ago is very different from the present neural process through which the memory functions. If memory were only a material process in the brain, this leap back to the past would be impossible, for material processes exist only in the present. No present physical event can tear itself out of its physical context and be or touch an event that happened twenty-five years ago. No more can the brain as a part of the physical world and sustained by present physical forces leap forward to an event that is to take place twenty-five years from now. (3) The admitted facts of suggestion, auto-suggestion, hypnotism and dissociation go far to establish the contention that the mind is not a mere epiphenomenon of the brain, accompanying its processes without influencing them as our shadow accompanies us while we walk without helping us to walk, but a real factor in our mysterious being, with a structure of its own, which may be disintegrated and dissociated even when the unity and continuity of the physiological process is not interrupted, and as truly an agent in our conscious experience and our life-planning as electricity is in the physical world. (4) Moreover, the great fact of knowledge itself cannot be projected on one plane. The relations of the brain to other physical objects belong to a definite time and place. All objects with which the brain interacts are here and now. It cannot

interact with objects of the distant past. My brain cannot interact with the brain of Cæsar. But the relation of the mind in knowledge to its object seems to be of a different order. In knowledge the mind moves with ease and confidence toward a past which is far behind us and toward a future which is not yet. It seems plain to common sense, then, that in the knowledge-relation we have something unique, something not found in any physical relations whatsoever, something more private than the mere interaction of physical things.

What conclusion, for our present purpose, may we draw from the arguments briefly presented above, for the heterogeneity of mind and brain? If it is impossible to project the mental life of man on one plane now, it does not seem absurd to infer that "the body is not the sole efficient agent in the production of consciousness,"⁶ that mind and brain are interdependent factors in our mental life and that both derive from factors that are interdependent in reality as a whole? And if this inference is allowed, we may ask with A. K. Rogers: "What is to hinder the relation of my consciousness to reality from being such that it should still go on, with only its point of connection shifted? There is the whole wide universe to furnish such a point of connection. Why should this particular relationship, which now holds necessarily be the only possible one, so that its severance will annihilate one of the terms related?"

In the second place, we might try to show by moral and metaphysical considerations that immortality is a reasonable affirmation and a legitimate hope. The belief in immortality is generally the consequence of a

⁶ A. K. Rogers.

deeper affirmation, namely, that reality is at bottom a harmonious, complete and rational whole and not a confusion or mere chaos of irrationalities. Science makes a postulate of this kind when it says that the world is knowable. The moral sense makes a similar postulate when it speaks of a universal moral order. The æsthetic sense likewise sees in the beauty of the world a glimpse of a universal but as yet unseen harmony. Theism postulates a God who is the complete realization of truth, goodness and beauty. These are some of the living postulates that lie back of the faith in immortality. If they are strong and persistent, the faith in immortality will be held tenaciously and sincerely. If they are weak and intermittent, the faith in immortality will be feeble and fluctuating.

Edward Caird says that this is the only properly religious proof of immortality and he is right. Certainly it is the only proof that Jesus offers. He refutes the Sadducees who did not believe in a future life for man by declaring that such a belief is involved in our very consciousness of the existence of God. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read what was spoken to you by God, saying: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him." The reason why it is possible to believe that there is a future life for man while we do not believe that there is any such future for animals is the fact that a divine principle manifests itself already in man's life here which is not so manifested in the other creatures. It is because man rises to a belief in God or, to use more mystical language, to a consciousness of and union with God, that he can be assured of a life after death. The life of the soul in

constant communion with God is raised to so high a pitch of confidence that it leaps over death and affirms its continuity beyond the grave.

While the religious proof of immortality is based on the confidence that is begotten by the soul's own abundant life, the moral arguments which are presented so persuasively to-day by several of the Ethical Movement leaders, are of a somewhat different nature. They spring out of the failures or incompleteness of life. If we postulate the reasonableness, the integrity and harmony of the world, the incompleteness and disharmony of our lives demand immortality for their fulfillment. Our natures bear witness to a power of life and growth far beyond the utmost afforded by the opportunities of the world. Everyone who has begun to use the higher gifts of his nature has found in them possibilities of growth to which no limit can be assigned. The conditions of our present life are inadequate to our highest personal and social ideals. Out of this sense of the disparity between man's possibilities and aspirations on the one hand and the narrow scope afforded them in the brief space of this life on the other hand, springs either pessimistic despair or the affirmation that a universe which sustains itself and its order through all its changes and seeming losses will be able to meet the demand for survival which its own conscious children make. Those who construe the universe as a self-sustaining order, every part of which points to the whole to which it belongs, easily come to affirm that the almost universal belief in immortality is in the spiritual world what an instinct is in the animal world. Every animal instinct points to something in the world which is able to satisfy and fulfil it. Food is the earth's counterpart to the hunger-impulse; the breasts of the

mother are nature's provision for the thirst of her children; the sex of the female is nature's answer to the sex of the male; without the varying seasons and climates of the earth, the migratory instinct of the birds would be unintelligible; the mind's marvelous power of mathematical construction finds its explanation in the mathematical order of the universe; the eight or nine senses of a human being are a clue to the various forms, aspects and activities of the physical universe; in a word, every living creature is a microcosm, corresponding to the macrocosm in which it has arisen and in response to whose nature its nature has been formed. And when an imaginative, affirmative, venturesome mind contemplates facts of this kind, it is in the mood to believe that the soul's demand for immortality is instinctive in its nature and that it is sure to meet its counterpart in Reality as every instinct does. Such an argument is of course not coercive in its cogency; it is a value-judgment rather than an existential judgment; it is not a dogma to be imposed by us either on our neighbor's mind or our own but rather a faith to experiment with, a hope to venture out upon, a trust to commit ourselves to and about the only test of its validity we are likely to get in this life is its pragmatic value as a motive in concrete living.

The more distinctively social side of our moral nature also demands immortality for profound ethical reasons. It demands a second chance for those who through early death or parental neglect or external accident or bad heredity or evil environment or social injustice have missed the opportunity for self-realization in this life. It demands also for the cruel, the sensual and the unjust such an experience beyond the grave as shall bring home to them the personal and

social meanings of their lives and deeds. The quickened moral sense is so aroused by the injustices of the present order that it cannot be at peace unless it can somehow hope for a moral process beyond this life which shall carry the work of moralization to a point away beyond that reached here.

Finally, the pragmatic value of the belief in immortality, for those who are not in the habit of demanding a strict theoretical basis for their affirmations, seems an added reason for taking the belief as valid. It reconciles us to the loss of our friends to believe that they are venturing forth into other realms of being. It gives some hope to the social worker whose work otherwise would often seem like the labor of the Danaides, because it enables him to see in every normal human being a spirit in the making and to believe that the universe has other agencies for evoking what is best in man beyond those he can now bring to bear.

It is perfectly obvious that such a belief in immortality as might be held on these general grounds cannot rank high in the estimation of those who insist that our conduct should be based only on objective knowledge. But such a conception of conduct could never arise except in the classroom or the study. Real life knows nothing of it. We all live beyond our objective knowledge. Business, especially in its early stages, is a venture. Radio was at first a venture. So was aeronautics. So is every marriage. We live toward and plan for a future which we never really know until it becomes the present and the past. The element of belief, hope and trust is very large in every forward-moving life and to eliminate this element would bring complete stagnation. We must strive to eliminate risk and to act on objective knowledge as far as possible but

to refuse to venture beyond that is to limit the possibilities of life. And the real question concerning the belief in immortality is not whether we can prove it beyond any reasonable doubt but whether we have the courage and the venturesomeness to live ourselves as though it were true and to treat our neighbors, not as hewers of wood and drawers of water, but as though they were immortal spirits in the earthly stage of an unpredictable evolution.

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